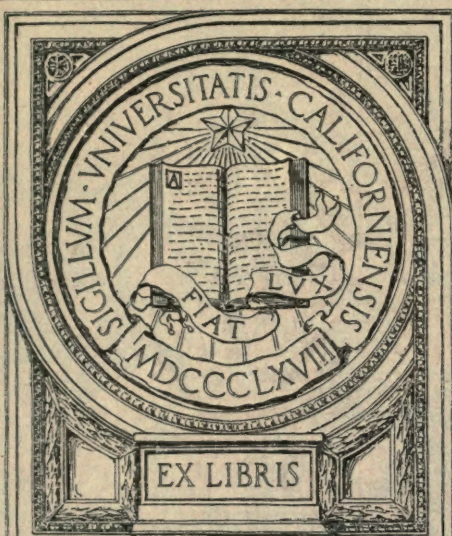




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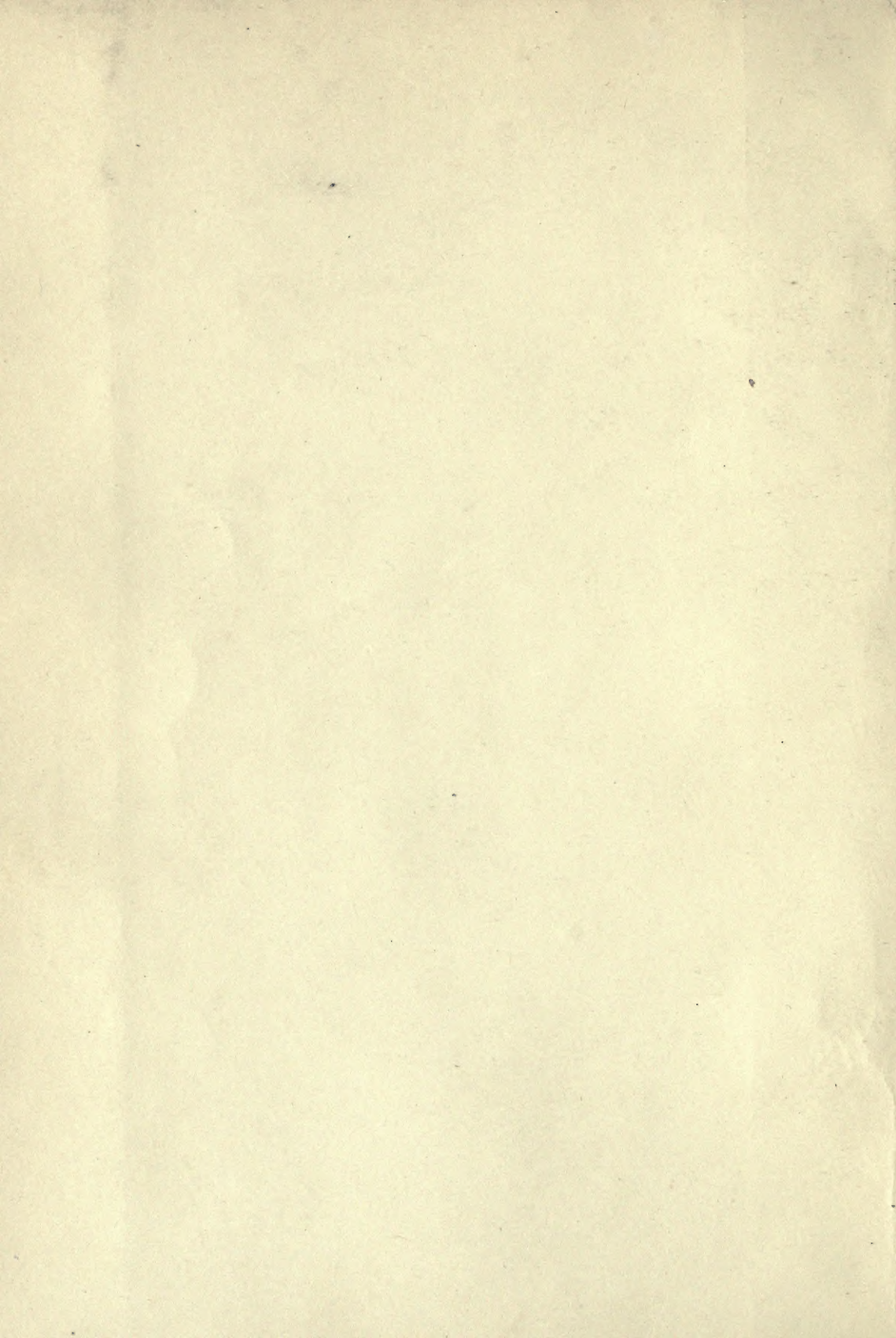
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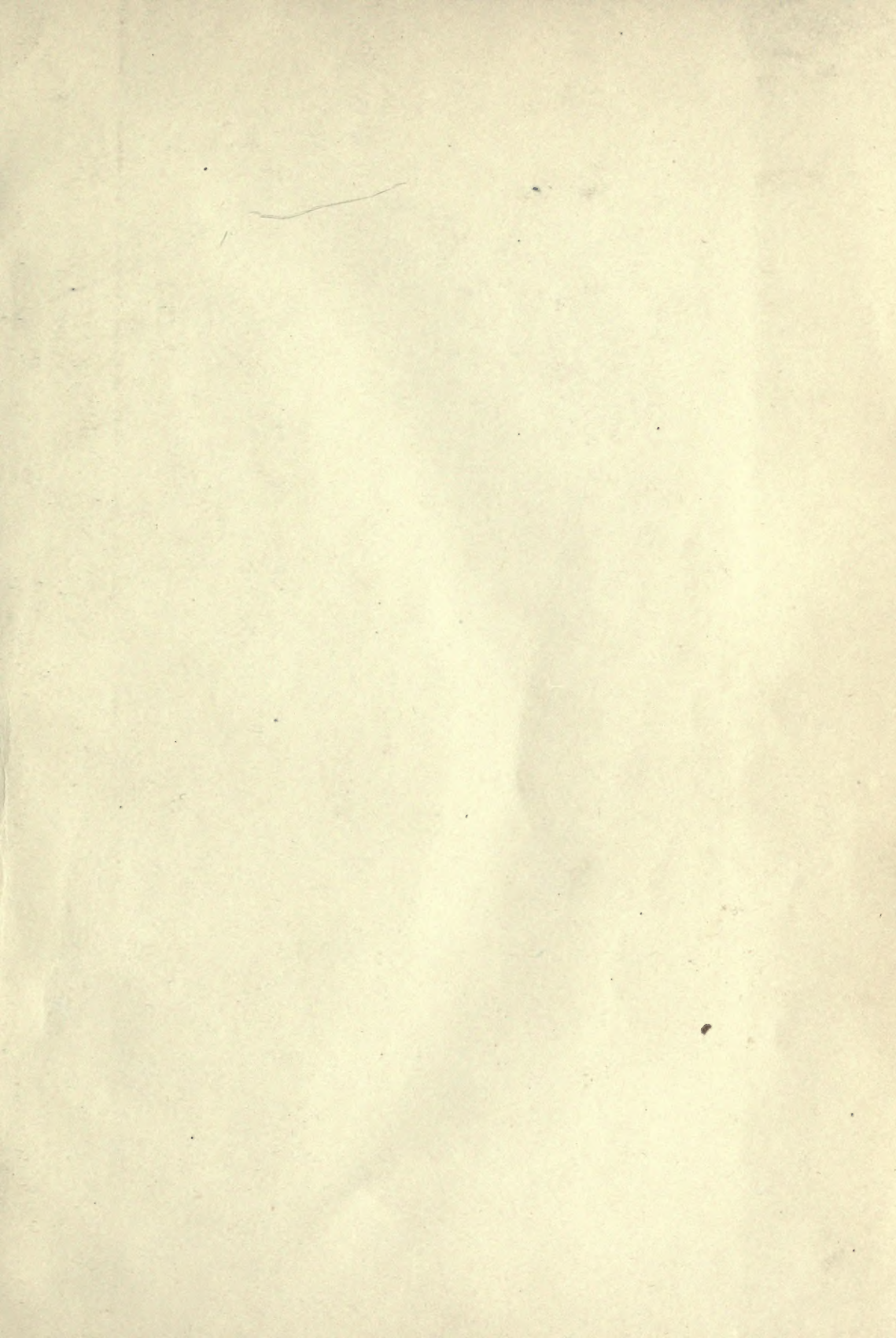

























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A HISTORY  
OF  
GREEK LITERATURE

BY  
THOMAS SERGEANT PERRY

AUTHOR OF "ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY," "FROM  
OPITZ TO LESSING," "THE EVOLUTION OF THE SNOB."



NEW YORK  
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1890



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To My Wife

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.







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## PREFACE.

---

THIS book is an attempt to recount the history of Greek literature, not so much to classical students as to those who have no direct knowledge of the subject. Albert Wolff's "Pantheon des Classischen Alterthums" (Berlin: Hempel, 1881), a volume of the excellent series of the "Classiker aller Zeiten und Nationen," has served as a model.

Among many things which doubtless demand apology is the reference (p. 442) to Windisch's interesting hypothesis on the influence of the New Comedy upon the Sanskrit drama, which is spoken of as if it were a fact. Prof. L. von Schroeder, in his interesting "Indiens Literatur und Cultur in historischer Entwicklung" (Leipzig, 1887), has shown that the hypothesis is untenable.

It has been thought undesirable to mention all the authorities used; the "general reader" does not care for, and the scholar does not need, the frequent footnote in a book of this sort.

The author tenders his warmest thanks to Mr. A. P. C. Griffin, of the Boston Public Library, who, with the utmost kindness, saw about four-fifths of the book through the press, during the author's absence from the country; to Mr. Louis Dyer for many valuable suggestions and much good counsel, as well as for permission to use his manuscript translations of Euripides; to Mr. J. G. Croswell for kind aid; and to the many writers who allowed him to make use of their published translations in this book. He, moreover, desires to express his indebtedness to Mr. E. E. Treffry, of New York, who read the proofs, not only with untiring patience, but also with friendly zeal.







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THE MUSES.



# GREEK LITERATURE.

## INTRODUCTORY.

The Independence of the Greek Literature—Its Influence—Its Artistic Qualities. The People; their Earliest History. The Country; its Geography—The Possible Influence of Climate, etc. The Language.

ONE of the most striking qualities of Greek literature is its originality; it sprang, so to speak, from the soil, without marked traces of foreign admixture, adopting, to be sure, the forms which are employed independently by every other race that makes use of letters as a method of expression, but developing them more completely than has been done elsewhere. Starting in this way free in the main from outside influences, it grew under the hands of the most wonderful people that the world has ever known, to be the model for succeeding civilizations. In literature, as everywhere, the best wins; and in studying the literature of Greece we are really studying not merely forms of expression, rich thought, wise comment and explanation that are unfailing sources of delight and instruction, but also the foundations of nearly all the work that has been done since in every civilized country. The lines that the Greeks drew without rule or precedent have acquired an



authority which has given them the force of literary canons to inspire and direct subsequent work of the world. The quality that characterizes their literature has proved a model for their successors; it has been absorbed, at times, with much conscious effort that has blurred the force of its influence, and the ultimate consequence of the whole ripening of modern civilization has been to bring men back to wonder and admiration of their unparalleled performance. Naturally, Greek literature is not a unit; when we speak of some of its most brilliant successes we should properly define it as Athenian literature; and, too, the later work of the Alexandrians, which was the only instance of the Greeks imitating instead of directly producing, has been the main source of modern inspiration; yet it is to be remembered that even then they were Greeks copying themselves, and not outside barbarians laying on an artificial polish. And, too, it is towards the best of the native Greek literature that men have gradually made their way with ever growing respect. They have at times lost the way and have given their devotion to what was second-best, but with a wider knowledge has come frank reverence for only the most characteristic of their productions. As the tracks where the first settlers strayed become the streets of the established city, so have the different paths of the Greeks become highways on which alone modern men have been free to move. Their epics, their lyrics, their drama, their histories, their philosophy, have left their mark on the taste of later generations. They imposed the laws which have ruled since their day, not so much by legislation, however, as by doing naturally what has been afterwards attempted by earnest effort. Their unconscious ease has been succeeded by the more or less deliberate attempts of those who have seen in the beauty of Greek work an ideal as well as a model. This, then, marks the important difference between the literatures of Greece on the one hand and on the other that of Rome and modern civilizations, that the first grew up untrammelled, as the natural expression of direct vision, while ever since men have seldom felt themselves free from the necessity of referring to the foundations of literary art.

Yet the general resemblance in the growth of different literatures can not be always explained as imitation. The path in which the Greeks trod has been followed independently by different races, among which we find that uniformly poetry precedes prose, and that the epic appears before the drama, so that we may safely conclude that the course of the Greek letters was in accordance with a form of development that marks all literature, that there is a uniformity in the actions of different races as there is between individuals, and that in both the difference is in the accomplishment rather than in the ends aimed at. To what extent this hypothesis is true, will be seen in the further study

of Greek writings, but, granting a general analogy, we shall nowhere find the same brilliant performance that we find in Greece. Its whole literature is distinguished by a keen artistic sense that is made up of freshness and truth to nature. Everywhere the Greek shunned exaggeration. Unlike the Sanskrit writers he was impressive without being grandiose; unlike the Chinese, he was simple without being puerile, and when we compare the Greek with more familiar literatures that have been built upon it, the difference becomes even plainer. As Taine has well said in his *Philosophie de l'art en Grèce*, "A glance at their literature in comparison with that of the East, of the middle ages, and of modern times; a perusal of Homer compared with the *Divina Commedia*, *Faust*, or the Indian epics; a study of their prose in comparison with any other prose of any other age or any other country, would be convincing. By the side of their literary style, every style is emphatic, heavy, inexact and unnatural; by the side of their weird types, every type is excessive, gloomy, and morbid; by the side of their poetic and oratorical forms, every form not based on theirs is out of all proportion, ill devised, and misshapen." Possibly this statement exemplifies the faults it names with profusion, but it also conveys the truth that the Greek work is distinguished by proportion, by moderation.

This moderation was a quality that it possessed from the beginning, in, say, the tenth century before Christ, until the classic Greek literature faded out of existence in the sixth century of our era, for so long was its life. What then were the conditions in which we find it appearing? The Greeks belonged to the Aryan family, the great branch of the human race that included Kelts, Slavs, Teutons, Lithuanians, Iranians, Indians, Latins and Greeks, or, possibly, more exactly, the races that first spoke these languages. The early home of the Aryans was long held to be the high plateau, north of the Himalayas, in Central Asia, but of late this hypothesis, which rested rather on ignorance of the facts than on definite knowledge, has been much shaken, and it has been held with plausibility that the once heretical notion that it had its home in Europe has some interesting arguments in its favor. Together with this hypothesis, which seems to have owed its origin to the general impression that Asia, with its historical antiquity, must have been the mother of nations, there has also succumbed any wide confidence in a remote special connection between the Italians and the Greeks. In the absence of definite knowledge this theory has flourished, as a bit of inheritance from the loftier repute, doubtless, of Greek and Roman antiquity, but it is only a hypothesis by no means firmly established. It has been maintained that the two races, besides their common inheritance, owned reminiscences of a union merely between themselves sub-



sequent to their separation from the main stock, reminiscences, to be sure, of a very vague and shadowy kind, yet sufficient to prove their early union. But this is mere conjecture, built on a very slight foundation, and unable to present convincing proofs. The differences between the two races are too great to warrant any assertion of their original identity. At the first dawns of history we find the Greeks settled in the land which is still the home of their descendants.

Undoubtedly the early founders of this illustrious people formed a race that had risen but little above absolute savagery. Just as mathematicians are able to ascertain the height of a mountain without climbing it, so modern science has been enabled to collect from detached testimony a dim picture of the life of the pre-historic Aryan races.



A WOMAN (KORA) WITH A PLOW.

But the dimness of the picture is still its most striking quality, although very vivid accounts have been made of the idyllic condition of society before the separation of the different component parts. Thus, they have been represented as forming a peaceful collection of simple minded men, interested in pastoral pursuits, and enjoying all the pleasures which poets have set in the Golden Age. The family life of the early Aryans has been an especial object of enthusiastic praise; the father, we have been told, was the protector and guardian; the mother was a worthy housewife, who addressed her husband as "Master"; the daughter, or "milker," as she was named after her occupation in the dairy, flattered

her hard-working brother by calling him the "supporter," and all these words were yet new enough to carry with them full significance. These happy people did not live by agriculture alone; they dwelt in houses in walled towns, built wagons, and boats with rudders, understood the art of weaving; they painted pictures and composed poems; indeed, modern civilization seems to have had a formidable rival in its remote

ancestors. In fact, however, enthusiasm has probably overreached itself in building from words alone this idyllic vision of the past, for it seems more likely that men had not yet acquired the use of metals, and enjoyed the meager civilization of the stone-age. Some memorials of this antiquity we see in the discovery of the lake-dwellings in the lake of Geneva, which are curiously like similar constructions in New Guinea. Even if these were the dwellings of an earlier race, the invading Aryans were but more slightly civilized, if indeed they enjoyed any superiority in this respect. It must be remembered that in the earliest poetical memorials that have reached us, there are abundant traces of a wild and savage past, as when, for example, in the *Iliad*, Achilles drags the body of Hector around the walls of Troy, and buries twelve captured Trojans at the grave of his friend Patroclus; and in the mythology we find further instances of other barbarities of the gods. All these things go to show the existence of an earlier period of rank savagery.



PENELOPE AT THE LOOM.

In prehistoric times they had risen, if not to such considerable civilization as has at times been described, yet to a great advance upon actual wildness. The stone and jade weapons had been wonderfully improved and adapted to many useful practical ends, agriculture had been practiced, some animals had been tamed, the arts of tanning hides, braiding, spinning, and probably weaving were known, the rudiments at least of civilization had been painfully attained. The examination of their old ash-heaps and a host of other bits of evidence lead us to the opinion that for instance the first Aryan settlers in Italy were probably rather lower than the Celts and Germans when these were first mentioned in history. If we remember that the use of metals is one of the most important steps in the civilization of a race, and that this had not been learned by the Aryans until after their separation, it is easy and probably accurate to estimate the degree of their culture as something yet extremely crude. The determining of dates in this misty period is obviously impossible.

When and why the separation of the different races took place can not be determined. The Greeks, like almost all the Aryans at the begin-



ning of their history, imagined themselves the native, autochthonous inhabitants of the regions where they found themselves settled from time immemorial. There we find them at the first dawning of history, and there they had been for many years.

Greece itself is a triangular shaped peninsula, with its northern base resting on what is now Turkey in Europe, extending southeasterly into the eastern part of the Mediterranean. Near the southeasterly part of this peninsula, another peninsula is attached to the northern portion,



DORIAN WARRIOR.

by the Isthmus of Corinth, that projects into the sea south of the mainland with something of the shape of an ivy-leaf. This part was called the Peloponnesus. In addition there was a fringe of islands in the sea, and a small part of the coast of Asia. The whole country lies between the fortieth and thirty-sixth degrees of latitude; its greatest length is not more than two hundred and fifty miles; its greatest breadth, about one hundred and eighty. The total area of the mainland is only a little more than twenty thousand miles or about one third of that of New England. This scanty region was sub-divided into many small states; Attica, for instance, containing only about seven hundred and twenty miles,

being thus a little more than half as large as the State of Rhode Island. What the country lacked in size it made up in variety. The outline was very large, greater than that of both Spain and Portugal, and the mountainous formations helped to secure the country from foreign invasion. These last had another, possibly less advantageous effect on the political history of the country in augmenting the sense of seclusion and diversity of the various states. Another direct effect was to give variety of climate; in the highlands the snow lay deep till late in the spring, while at a lower level snow was never known. In the north, on the shore of the Ægean Sea, the climate was harsh like that of central Europe; on the southern slopes grew olives and grapes, and in the warmer regions figs, dates, and oranges. Athens especially enjoyed the advantages of a tropical land, being saved from intense heat, however, by cooling sea breezes. This variety in the productions protected the country from a monoton-

ous existence as a mere granary, and helped to make it an independent, self-supporting land, free from any one engrossing interest. Greece was not strong or simple-hearted enough to become a conquering nation; it was defended by its position from its most powerful enemies; and the comparative barrenness of its soil kept it a country in which, while life was easily supported, there was no temptation to seek for great gain. The compact seclusion of the various regions was doubtless of very great influence in preventing the unification of the different divisions into one whole. The political system of Greece rested on the idea of the entire independence of each separate city, and its history is made up of the records of the wars which this condition of things called forth until its final termination in anarchy. Possibly the Greek mind, with its aversion to abstractions, could never have been tolerant of an arrangement which substituted a theoretical term for the form of rule which was open to daily inspection, and moreover gave to the citizens a lively sense of responsibility which knit politics with literature in a way to preserve both from remoteness of life. Yet a less doubtful reason was the geographical one, the natural limits of the separate divisions, the local importance of the leading city. Yet even this political unit was unknown in the earliest times; the city grew up only by the amalgamation of separate villages, and even at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, the remote parts of Greece, as in the northwest, consisted of detached hamlets. How far the existence of various boundaries and the great variety and unextravagant beauty of the scenery contributed to the formation of the Greek taste can not be definitely stated. We can now only mention the coincidence, and the task of science is simply removing inexplicability from observed coincidences. Although the question is a complicated one, it may yet be possible to recognize in the conditions of the Greek life some of the causes that led to the moderation of their taste and to their aversion to all forms of extravagance. In the land that they inhabited they saw no inaccessible mountains; there were no vast expanses of plain, no gloomy masses of forest; the water that washed their shores did not present an unbroken vast expanse; its surface was covered with numerous islands, there was no great sweep of a mysterious sea to overawe the imagination: every thing was limited and open to approach. These facts perhaps saved the Greeks from a perception of their own insignificance; they were not overborne by the terrible relentlessness of nature and the impossibility of taming it. They escaped the depression that other races knew in less gracious surroundings, just as a person brought up in comfort or luxury is unconscious of the huge store of misery that infolds the world. They had not ever present before them any terrible symbol of the cruelty of nature, and thus their



pictures of life were always marked by grace and freedom from exaggeration.

Obviously, any such explanation can be no more than a mere hypothesis, but there were other causes which affected less obscurely the formation of the Greek character. The extent of their influence may be readily estimated by those who remember that the Greeks and Italians were equally descendants of one race, and that at their first appearance in history they were already marked by sharply distinct traits. The abundant coastline of Greece, the barrenness of its soil, the number of fertile islands within easy sailing distance, contributed to the formation of the many-sidedness of this people, by facilitating commerce and exploration, and by adapting them to a varied, unmonotonous existence. They were, moreover, thus brought into early contact with other races of advanced civilization, whose arts and sciences they swiftly absorbed and made their own; what was thus acquired they at once elevated into something beyond what had satisfied its original owners. Nature thus marked out Greece as a spot where an intelligent race, exceptionally preserved from anxious care on the one hand, and from no less fatal prosperity on the other, might be free to develop itself under the impulse, but not under the shadow, of riper civilizations. It was an aristocratic immunity from sordidness and materialism, as well as from the tiresome sameness of an agricultural life, that the whole race enjoyed, and with the advantage that the race was one in which subtlety, delicacy, and intelligence were the common property of the whole people and not a costly exotic that was to be acquired by only a few. The struggle for mere existence was not so severe that half the men were turned into machines while the other half found their chief delight in physical comfort; but life was easy for all who were free, and the higher interests were never crushed out of the majority, as generally happens in our modern civilizations.

The Greeks had other qualities of an aristocracy: they were few in numbers, and they were not marked by monotonous similarity. The two main families into which they were divided were the Æolian and the Ionic, to which must be added the Dorian and Athenian, who in time acquired the greatest prominence in the political and literary history of their country. The Æolian branch never attained equal importance; their qualities were less peculiarly Greek than those of their fellow countrymen, who were later never tired of casting their faults in their teeth. The Bœotians, for instance, were despised as a coarse, sordid people, without interest in intellectual matters, who shared the qualities of their heavy air and thick soil. The Dorians, originally a single people, soon grew to be a large branch. They were a genuine mountain-race, who after the Trojan war invaded the

Peloponnesus where they gradually established themselves and acquired new power. The Dorians possessed sturdy, energetic, conservative traits which preserved and extended a certain rugged virtue, but paid for it the usual price of harshness and a latent hostility to high civilization. The Ionians, on the other hand, who settled on the coast of Asia Minor, soon ripened into an accomplished and brilliant race, whose charm and flexibility stand in marked contrast with the severity of the Dorians. They founded colonies and disseminated their curiosity about life by their early attention to literature, and not to the poetical side alone but also to history and geography, as well as to philosophy and science. The Athenians were most closely allied with the Ionians, and they carried out most fully what these had begun. In all that they did they left the mark of grace and that highest art which is simplicity. Their glories will become sufficiently clear in the progress of this book, and it will be seen how much splendor they threw on the whole country. For, after all, distinct as were the various qualities of the different Greek races, they all combined to form a national character which stands in sharp contrast with that of other peoples. They shared, though in unequal



DORIAN GIRL.—(*Victor in the races.*)

measure, certain common properties, the love of freedom, keen interest in public affairs, poetical fancy, and a disposition for eloquence; they all possessed a sensitiveness to beauty and a delicacy of perception, which made them a unit in the face of foreign nations, although they were alive to their several family differences. Similar differences in what yet formed a separate entity, were those of the various dialects of the one Greek language, which belonged to the different branches



of the nation. And just as the Attic division became the most important, the language as they spoke it became the most authoritative and finally the only prevalent one. The wealth of the Greek tongue in its earliest traces proves that it was the product of a long prehistoric development. What the language was in the Homeric poems it substantially remained throughout the whole period in which Greek literature flourished : a rich, copious means of expression, abounding in words that readily lent themselves to the formation of compounds, and with a flexible syntax that well represented the Greek subtlety and ingenuity. Of course it was not a mere chance that gave this



ATHENIAN COSTUMES.

race so marvelous an instrument ; they created it rather by the need which they felt for expressing their own thoughts. As has been said, its ripe form indicated a long past : a language like the Greek does not grow in a day, and other proofs of its antiquity are not lacking. In their earliest work that has come down to us in a state of completion, that is to say in the Homeric poems, we find a degree of poetic excellence that bears indubitable evidence of a long line of predecessors. Every successful work implies a host of failures ; the opinion that the facility and grace of the Homeric hexameter were a special creation out of nothing by a gifted man, is one that has long held sway over men's minds, fostering mistaken views concerning the miraculous qualities of genius ; yet the examination of every case can but confirm the opposite view. Wherever we have all the testimony,

we see failures preceding the final success, and the slow growth of victory, as inevitably as we see the growth of all phenomena. What has at first seemed to be the product of some one half-inspired person has, when closely studied, turned out to be only the full development of a crude past. Such is uniformly the case in modern literatures, in which alone we have all the evidence, while of the classic literatures we have in general scarcely any thing but the best performance. Only their most famous work remains in sight above the flood of oblivion, and from the existence of two literatures, consisting mainly of masterpieces, it was easy to imagine that the ancients possessed the art, since lost, of producing great work without an apprenticeship. The indiscriminating fervor, too, of praise poured out on Greek literature has at times given to the difficult task of examining its growth the appearance of irreverence and iconoclasm. To be sure, this evil spirit of analysis has met no more formidable opposition than the assertion that the great writers, being creative, are hence superior to mole-eyed criticism, but this assertion is itself open to doubt, and within the last hundred years the whole point of view has been in process of change.



## BOOK I.—THE EPICS.

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### CHAPTER I.—THE HOMERIC QUESTION.

I.—The Beginnings of Literature—The Influence of Religious Feeling—The Traces of Early Song. II.—The Hexameter, and its Possible Growth. III.—The Homeric Poems—The References to an Earlier Period—The Ionic Origin of the Poems—The Existence of Homer. IV.—The Long Discussion of this Subject: Bentley, Wolf, etc. Possible Date of the Compositions of these Poems—Archæological Illustrations.

#### I.

IN time the notion of what literature is, has undergone serious modification, and it has been gradually becoming plain that it is unwise to speak of it as a separate concrete thing which may be detached from life and, as it were, be put on a shelf to be taken down at odd moments for examination like a bundle of dry bones. Yet so readily are unknown coins used as counters, and words employed as a substitute for thought, that literature and art have been, and for that matter still are, spoken of as if they were separate and remote exercises in composition rather than the utterances of human beings, the representation of men's thoughts and feelings, the fixed shadows of generations of men. Of no people is it truer than of the Greeks, that their literature is not an artificial product, but the race speaking. The most important thing to remember in studying their writings is that these are the direct expression of a free people, leading its own life, untrammelled by inherited rules or authoritative convention. This is the keynote to the comprehension of Greek literature, and one that it is not perfectly easy for us to understand, trained as we are to look at life not directly, but through the eyes of some one else, and accustomed to learn methods rather than to exercise direct vision. Only within the last hundred years, and in some part under the inspiration of the Greeks, have we begun again to see that life itself is something greater, vaster, and more solemn than any literary method.

While the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are the earliest Greek poems that have come down to us, it has become plain that they mark, as all the best work does, the end rather than the beginning of a great movement. Yet everywhere the earliest songs are those of a religious nature, and

before men begin to draw pictures of society, indeed before there is any society for them to draw, their attention is called to their relations with the world about and above them with all its mysteries and terrors. From the earliest times men grope for some religious explanation of the various phenomena that they observe, and their first utterances are the expression of their ready wonder and equally ready explanations. From fancied or observed coincidences, through thousands of imagined explanations, there grows up a mass of myths about the impressive order and apparent willfulness of nature, such as we find to have been the common property of the whole Aryan family, which developed into the adoration and personification of natural forces and phenomena. This underlies the Greek religion, but yet it is not a sufficient explanation to call this simply a nature worship. Zeus did not rule as a mere vast natural force; Poseidon was more than the mighty spirit of the deep; the gods were, rather, exalted beings who retained as their appurtenances these qualities of the forces of nature, but they had developed in the clear sunlight of the Greek mind into something like civilized human beings, devoid of cruel and monstrous qualities, and subject to the higher rule of ethical law. Inasmuch as the first thing that strikes us in examining the Greek mythology is the absence of what we may call municipal law in Olympus, and the social laxity of the divine beings, the mention of their subjection seems absurd. Their frequent infractions of the moral law seem to contradict the notion of their subordination to ethical control, and since it is man and not nature that is moral, it has been held that the Greek religion was purely a worship of nature.

But other testimony destroys the absolute sway of this theory. In the Homeric poems we find the gods but little removed from the condition of extraordinary people. Even before Homer the deities seem to have met more than half way the men who were promoted to their company; the relics of nature-worship survived, but as attributes of a worshiped deity, not as themselves objects of adoration. Thus Apollo



OLYMPIAN ZEUS.



was the sun-god, but it was the god and not the sun that received the prayers and thanks of men.

Nothing again, to consider the ethical control of the gods, is remoter from the Greek mind than the notion of lawlessness. It would especially ill become such half-human deities as those who filled its Olympus, and in the most frequent as well as the most solemn expressions of this literature we find continual reference to the existence of a higher law that rules over gods as well as men, and the belief in this equable justice was the core of their religion. In Homer, Herodotus, Æschylus, Pindar, Simonides, Sophocles, we find the statement of this principle which also animated the philosophers and the populace. What is most striking about this faith is its coherence with the general attitude of the Greek mind towards the universe with its abhorrence of inexplicable and willful forces. Harmony was the law of its being, in art and literature as well as in religion, and above and beyond the gods with an incrustation of baffling and discordant myths lay a wise fate that ruled mysteriously but with justice. This was their solution, a harmonious omnipotence directing gods and men.

How it grew up we can not affirm any more than we can affirm in what manner the principles that we find in their earliest work grew up. It is hard enough to show that they are there, but it may yet be said that its existence at the remotest times is another proof of the existence of a very long past of which only meager traces survive. In the Homeric poems we find reference to this venerable antiquity in the mention of the poems sung to propitiate Apollo at the time of the plague that visited the camp of the Achæians, and as a hymn of victory for Hector's death. Battle-songs, dance-songs, and military dances had a remote religious origin, for the solemnity of religious exercises preserves the oldest customs unchanged, and many of these found their way into the subsequent development of profane poetry. Thus when men called on the gods by many names under the belief that one of these might be more acceptable to him than another, and attempted to conciliate him by recounting his exploits, they were, in a way, laying some of the foundations of profane poetry, as they were doing when they sang the bold deeds of some great leader; thus we see the language and measures acquiring the use which was afterwards of profit to literature. The oracles, too, were of another ancient religious form.

In all these ways the use of songs was frequent: the deeds of heroes, for instance, were perpetuated by minstrels from an early date, and traces of their existence are to be found in the Homeric poems. Thus Homer—to adopt for convenience the name of the alleged author of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*—calls Achilles swift-footed, but nothing in the *Iliad* justifies the use of this name, which was apparently inherited from

the poets who sang other incidents of the hero's career. They had an abundance of subjects to choose from, and Homer frequently refers to myths and legends that could scarcely have been overlooked by the wandering bards, like those whom he mentions in the *Odyssey*. Of other forms of popular poetry there are abundant traces, such as the wedding and funeral chants and the many little songs of daily life; for farmers, mechanics, workmen of all sorts had their special favorite poems, from which grew the familiarity of the people with poetical melody and that general interest in song without which poetry is but a cold, artificial thing. In the numerous riddles, fables, catches, proverbs, and local legends, we see other familiar forms of verse. Names of the authors of these various songs and sayings are naturally enough lost in the same obscurity that always accompanies the beginnings of popular literature. In later times the effort was made to relieve this ignorance of the past by the invention of a number of bards who were thrust into the dark period somewhat indiscriminately. Orpheus is a pure invention, as mythical as his Sanskrit compeer, the ideal poet Rithu. Musaeus, the Servant of the Muses, and Eumolpus, the Good Singer, show by their names that they sprang from the brains of some grammarian, and the rest are similar shadows. While the names of the earliest singers are lost as hopelessly as those of the private soldiers in the Trojan war, their existence is proved by the excellence of the Homeric epics, and by the fixed formulas that are among the unmistakable reminiscences of those poems.

## II.

Another strong proof of a long growth is the smoothness of the hexameter, one of the most wonderful products of the Hellenic intelligence. Yet it is not to be understood that the Greeks created this amazing instrument out of hand. Far from it; in the first place no such complicated mechanism is ever suddenly created by any man, or set of men, however brilliant; and moreover, even if such creation were possible, it was unnecessary, for the Greeks already possessed, in common with the rest of the Aryan family, a rudimentary measure out of which they developed this favorite form. This common property of the whole family, or at least of the Indian and Iranian division, the Germanic, and the Greco-Italic, consisted of a verse, formed of two distinctly separate parts, each of which contained four ictuses and four unaccented syllables; each part beginning with an unaccented syllable and ending with an ictus. This four-timed half-verse underlies the oldest songs of the Germanic races as well as the early Vedic hymns, the crude Saturnian verse of Italian races, and formed the basis of the



Greek hexameter in the hands of the race that touched it only to bring it to perfection. The measure, still familiar to children beginning their lessons at the dancing-school,—the left foot forward three times, then right and left, in four time, was the basis of the mingled song and dance, forward and back, or to the right or left and back, practiced at the earliest sacrifices of our remote ancestors, thus forming another instance of the way in which, as Sir John Lubbock says, the sports or lessons of children reproduce early stages in the history of mankind. Possessed by all before this separation, in the hands of the Greeks it grew to the condition in which we find it in the early epic, the fitting instrument for those wonderful poems. That they brought it to its perfection is but one, and not the least important, of their many accomplishments.

### III.

Such are some of the reminiscences of the forgotten past that survive in the work of Homer, but, as we have seen, they are not the only ones. The development of the language into the rich, copious, and flexible instrument which we find there, belongs also to the indirect proofs of the already great age of the race. More than this, it is to be noticed that Homer mentions the minstrels who sang the past glories of admired heroes. The repose which followed the period of migrations gave an opportunity for fuller literary development by securing the perspective which is as essential for a poem as a picture. It was in the colonies established on the coast of Asia Minor, and especially in the central region, Ionia, that civilization first appeared. Doubtless, intercourse with older foreign countries contributed, if not a model, at least many valuable influences and suggestions of custom, which were soon modified by the ingenious spirit of the Greeks. The colonies also preserved distinct memories of their mother-country; the emigrants had carried with them their old legends and traditions, yet it is only natural that the subject which had most interest for them was the description of the victory of the Greeks over the Asiatics in the Trojan war. For this they would have a feeling which they could not have for the legends that referred to events that took place on Greek soil. Both their inherited patriotism and that which their new home inspired, would lend to this story a fascination which the many other tales of Greece would have been unable to arouse. It was the same interest that the Spaniards felt for the Cid; or that the writers of later epics have presumed to exist with regard to their heroes.

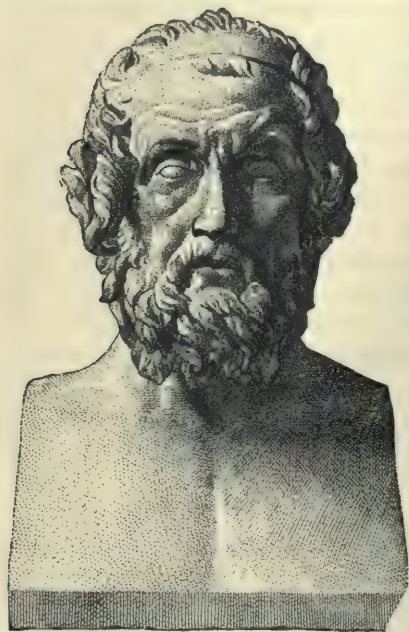
So much is probable, or, to be safer, so much is possible, that the Homeric poems were of Ionic origin. Any one, however, who feels emboldened to make any further statements about their composition, finds his path a thorny one, for the Trojan war is not yet over, and any definite affirmation that may be made about it is likely to call forth serious opposition. In regard to so unsettled a matter it may be best simply to state some of the conditions that render certainty about Homer and the Homeric poems extremely difficult. In the first place the question as to whether or not Homer, the author of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, ever lived, is one that finds waiting it two widely distinct answers. Until towards the end of the last century, the existence of Homer was no more generally doubted than that of Virgil. Yet even the many birthplaces that were assigned him by popular tradition could not save him from modern criticism, and while the superfluous claimants for the honor of fellow-citizenship with Homer could never come to agreement, their unusual number was held to corroborate the opinion that he certainly must have lived at some time and at some place. Under the impression that there was a Homer, his bust was made, evidently at a time when sculpture was in a flourishing condition, but its existence no more proves that the poet ever lived than does the famous statue in the Belvedere of the Vatican prove that Apollo ever actually appeared in human form. Both do but attest what most of the Greeks generally believed.

#### IV.

Already in antiquity a few writers held that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were probably written by different men, but this view met with no wide acceptance and was commonly regarded as a mere paradox. During the tutelage of modern civilization the views of the ancients prevailed, especially with regard to their own writings, and during the greater part of the last century the traditions of Homer who composed the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* remained almost unquestioned. A century earlier, indeed, Fénelon in his *De l'Existence de Dieu*, brought forward the writings of these poems by a man of genius as an argument in favor of the analogous creation of the world by an all-wise ruler of the universe; yet at about the same time, the Abbé d'Aubignac, who is only known now for his unflinching allegiance to the three unities, affirmed that it was impossible that a Homer ever lived, and gave utterances to skeptical views concerning the origin of the Homeric poems. But this was a mere vague statement by an unlearned man who expressed an opinion without the capacity to support and defend



it by any other argument than mere abuse of all Greek literature, which he set much lower than that of Rome. This view of the superiority of Latin literature was one that belonged to the whole age between the expiration of Humanism in the seventeenth century and the beginning of the Romantic movement at the end of the eighteenth, a period of benumbing reaction in literature, art, and politics, against individuality and independence. The tamer merits of the Latin writers found sympathizing admirers in men who felt disgust with the extravagances of the later writers who drew their inspiration from the Renaissance. The Roman literature was the readiest model of cor-



HOMER.

rectness and of what could be done by training, and the study of the less formal Greek consequently languished, surviving mainly because it was the language in which the New Testament was written. Throughout Europe the tepid excellence and echoing rhetoric of the Latin writers prevailed almost without opposition; Statius, Lucan, and Virgil were the admired models. If we consider England alone, we shall recall Pope's ignorance of Greek, Addison's very moderate command of the tongue, Dr. Johnson's superior knowledge of Latin; and the history of education there and on the continent makes it clear that when men spoke of the classics they meant the Latin writers, and that the influence of the Greek was almost nothing.

The quarrel between the ancients and the moderns, as it is called, which broke out in England, France, and Italy at the end of the seventeenth century, was full of unexpected results for both ancient and modern literature, for it rendered necessary a general overhauling of men's opinions concerning both. The most modern of the moderns agreed in giving Homer an inferior place; at this the scholars took fire and began to sing the praises of the old poet. They were further driven to amending their rusty scholarship. In England the discussion called forth from Bentley (1662-1742) his exposure of the ungenueness of the so-called letters of Phalaris, which was a serious attack on the previous rhetorical, uncritical reading of the ancients. The

work which Bentley began in this way, he carried further in his later investigations, and he thus deserves the credit of establishing modern scholarship on the lines which it has since followed. He gave only incidental attention to what afterwards became the still unsettled Homeric question, yet in 1713 we find him denying the current notion that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were fables ingeniously devised by a moral teacher for the purpose of carrying allegorical instruction to mankind. Thus Pope, in the preface to his translation of the *Iliad*, speaks of the allegorical fable as one of the many causes of admiration, and treats the poem throughout as a bit of literary composition, an artificial product. Anthony Collins, in his *Discourse of Free Thinking*, had said that Homer "designed his poem for eternity, to please and instruct mankind." "Take my word for it," said Bentley, "poor Homer, in those circumstances and early times, had never such aspiring thoughts. He wrote a sequel of songs and rhapsodies, to be sung by himself for small earnings and good cheer at festivals and other days of merriment; the *Iliad* he made for men, and the *Odyssey* for the other sex. These loose poems were not collected together in the form of an epic poem till Pisistratus' time." This again was but a side assertion, thrown out without the proof that only longer and more careful study could supply. The same opinion, however, found frequent expression in the books of separate authors, for every important modification of the generally accepted views on any given subject is commonly preceded by a running fire that shows that many men are working in the same direction. Thus Vico in Italy, and a Professor Blackwell of Aberdeen, made very similar statements on this question. Robert Wood's *Essay on the Original Genius of Homer*, published in 1775, was another important contribution to the general discussion. On the one hand it disposed of the moribund notion that Homer had composed his poems with a didactic intention and substituted for it the representation of a man of vast native genius, therein, it will be noticed, agreeing with the then new and now vanishing idea of genius as an inspirer of literary composition; on the other, it proposed a possibly more useful novelty, for it contained an account of his visit to Troy and an attempt to test Homer's descriptions by an examination of the sites mentioned in the *Iliad*.

All these instances, as well as the increasing number of translations, attest the growth of general interest in Homer. The whole course of men's thoughts was in process of change, a new generation was turning from outworn traditional authority to the study of nature and original literatures, and the investigation of the earliest Greek poems gave men the same delight that they received from the study of their own national beginnings; for in fact they were going back to the



beginning of all modern civilization. What had before seemed harsh and violent in Homer no longer needed to be apologized for, as Pope had done for "the vicious and imperfect manners" of his heroes. Wider knowledge brought its reward in the greater tolerance of what had shocked those men who drew their notions of what a hero should be, and do, and say, from what we may call the secondary literatures. With this tolerance there came, however, a certain intolerance of artifice and literary conventions. This, however, is not only remote from ancient literature, it is anticipating the changes in modern taste. Only very gradually did the Latin literature lose its former superiority, and did æsthetic criticism give way to modern criticism, which consists rather of scientific examination of the historical growth than of mere enforcement of conventional taste. Along with this change appeared the decay of imitation as the groundwork of literature. By the direct application of the altered views concerning the classics, Lessing and Winckelmann led the way to the purer and remoter Greek classicism, and to the general overhauling of long accepted dogmas. The new study of modern literature, the exhumation of old ballads and popular poems, threw unexpected light on Greek antiquity, and in 1795, F. A. Wolf, who is rightly called the father of modern philology, published his *Prolegomena*. The effect of this book on the studies of the classics has been really incalculable; it is scarcely too much to say that its appearance clearly marked the period when the modern mind, which had hitherto been trained under the influence of Roman literature, attained its majority, and became able to instruct and correct its old classical teachers. Modern science overthrew the old classical tradition, but in so doing, while it revised, it renewed, our connections with antiquity by proving the historical rather than the purely pedagogical relation of the past to the present. The aim of Wolf's book was to show that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were not composed by a single poet, Homer, but that each of them, and more particularly the *Iliad*, was made up of a number of separate songs by different authors. For a long time, for hundreds of years, these heroic songs describing incidents of the siege of Troy had circulated among the Greek tribes; each one narrated but a single incident of the war, and had been composed for singing, with the accompaniment of the lyre, at banquets and festivals. In time, these songs were combined into orderly groups and then into complete wholes, very much as we now have them, and were finally written down in permanent form by the command of Pisistratus in the sixth century before Christ.

These views of Wolf's at once made a great stir, and received from many persons warm welcome. Others again were pained by what seemed to them the irreverence of Wolf's propositions, for at no time

in the history of modern literature was the impression stronger that sheer genius could accomplish any thing it undertook. In Germany, however, there was also growing the principle which has given that country the lead it now holds in most matters of scholarship, namely, that what had previously seemed the work of creation proved on closer examination to be the product of growth. This view, which was first clearly uttered by Herder, underlies the modern opinion regarding Homer. Even at the present day, however, although in Germany the disbelief in Homer's personality may be said to be the prevailing opinion, there are still men of great learning and keen intelligence, who refuse to accept Wolf's views. In France and England there are still more, for often scholarship is influenced by national pride, and the fact that the Germans hold an opinion has been known to delay its acceptance among its morbidly patriotic neighbors. Long after Wolf's views were current in Germany, and had made over classical scholarship, they were without influence in France and England. Since the war of 1870, however, France has assimilated more German thought and learning than it had done in fifty years before; and if England lags behind, we must remember that a great deal of valuable material reaches its shores only as wreckage.

It is not necessary to give a detailed account of all the modifications of the original heresy that have been suggested by German scholars. The vagueness of every explanation of the way in which the poems grew into their present shape has given them all perfect freedom to arrange the particulars as might seem best. Lachmann, to mention one of the most important, in his examination of the *Iliad*, imagined that he found sixteen (or, counting the last two books, eighteen) distinct lays by different authors and without connection. Each lay, he held, was at first complete in itself, but was afterwards expanded, and was finally brought into its present shape by the recension of Pisistratus. Grote, again, in the *History of Greece*, suggested that the *Iliad* consisted of an earlier Achilles (to which belong bks. 1, 8, 11-22; the 23d and 24th being later), and an *Iliad* proper, composed of bks. 2-7, and 10. The ninth book, he holds, was composed later. Those who have defended the *Iliad* as the work of a creative genius have maintained equally diverse views. They agree, however, in opposing Wolf's statement with an unbroken negative. When he argued that the poems are too long to have been composed and handed down to us without the use of writing, which only came into vogue later, they affirm that there were many persons in classic times who knew them all by heart; and that in other countries, as in Iceland and India, long and important poems have been handed down by oral transmission. To Wolf's argument that such extensive works would



never have been composed unless for readers as well as hearers, they reply that the poems themselves were of sufficient popularity to bring and keep together delighted and unwearied listeners. This affirmation that the poems did not exist as a whole until the time of Pisistratus, they directly deny ; and the numerous contradictions and inaccuracies they match with instances from the works of later poets. Yet the extent to which what we may call the attack has been carried on since by Wolf's followers, has had the effect of introducing many modifications in the defense, and almost every writer in behalf of Homer has found himself compelled to accept some of the statements of his adversaries. The original Homers survives, but often in an unrecognizable shape, and frequently his best friends strip him of much of his ancient glory. Bergk, for instance, acknowledges that the original work of Homer was much modified and enlarged by his successors. Their main argument, however, is the unanimous voice of antiquity in behalf of single authorship and the general consistency of the *Iliad*. Only genius, it is affirmed, could make use of the abundant material that undeniably existed and weave it into a harmonious and generally consistent whole. The discussion, if it has left Homer still to be wrangled over, has yet been of service in accustoming scholars to apply to the investigation of classical subjects a method of examination which rests rather on science than on prepossession. Modern scholarship may be said to have begun with this controversy, which has seriously shaken the blind confidence in the power of genius to accomplish whatever it may wish ; even Homer's most earnest supporters have ceased to regard him as a man who thought suddenly of an epic poem as one thinks of the answer to a riddle. Then, too, the fact that the question is really insoluble has given it an eternal freshness and made its discussion an important part of education, for scarcely any training is more valuable than the weighing of evidence, which is, after all, the main business of life. And even those who still cling to the belief that Homer created these two poems out of his own head by sheer genius, may perhaps be willing to acknowledge that the long discussion, which they hold to be unconvincing, has at least helped men to sounder views on general questions of literature ; and it is hard to doubt that its influence will not continue to promote wider study. In one way, however, they will perhaps object to a possible result, for the examination of the early literature of remote races can not fail in time, by the mere accumulation of evidence, to enlarge men's sympathies beyond the limits of Greece and Rome. To some this will seem an irreverent misuse of study, for to scholars of a certain sort the real Holy Land is Greece, and any thing which exposes its literature to comparison with what has been done in outside regions will meet as much opposition

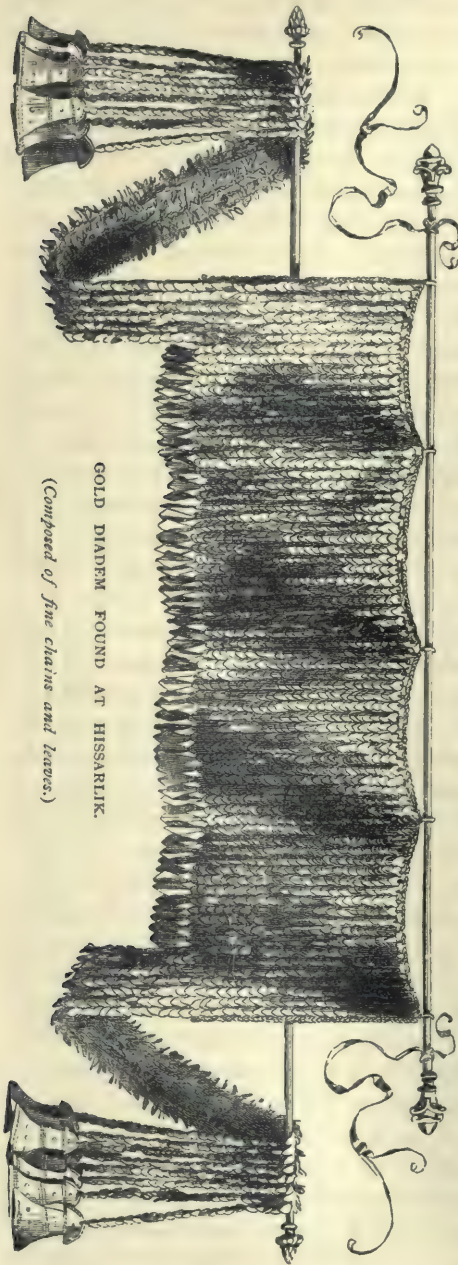
as did the science of philology, when it began to assert its claims, and to show the relation between Greek and Latin and all the members of the Indo-European family. It is obvious, however, that only in this way can literature be profitably studied, and that it will tend to diminish delight can not be shown by analogy from the other sciences. Interest in geology has not been proved to have diminished men's love of natural scenery, nor are botanists conspicuous for their indifference to the beauty of flowers. On the other hand, it would be fairer to say that their enthusiasm only increases with their knowledge, that their notions of beauty are enlarged by study, that the man who knows the most about any given subject loves it most. The much commended system of learning any thing about literature solely by studying beautiful extracts, is necessarily one-sided and insufficient. We should laugh at those who read Shakspeare only in this way, and what is true of him is true of Greek literature or of any other literature, that only when taken as a whole can the full secret of its beauty be intelligently perceived. The connotations of wit, eloquence, grace, simplicity are only fully appreciated when we can understand the general condition of interest in these matters and the degree of accomplishment already attained. Of this absolute value we know practically nothing, and our efforts to define it only define ourselves.

We may say indeed with perfect truth that we also know nothing or next to nothing about the conditions in which the poems were produced. We know only that the Greeks were settled in Greece and on the eastern coast of Asia Minor, and we have a certain number of baffling legends and myths regarding their hopelessly obscure past, as well as a few equally puzzling memorials of an uncertain antiquity, and suddenly we are confronted by these two poems which stand unrivaled in their wonderful portrayal of human nature. Achilles, Patroclus, Hector, Andromache and Penelope—and the list does not end with them—remain now, as they appeared in the dawn of history, full of noble feelings, accurately portrayed, living people in fact, so wonderful is the poet's skill, and their various fates are recounted with a perfection of form that delights every reader and inspires questions which in spite of a multitude of voices yet await an answer. The Ionian Greeks were settled in a region that was already the home of older and riper culture, and traces of its influence may be found in some of the arts, though there is no sign of it to be found in this early poetry. There, at least, there is no reason for doubting, we have an original outgrowth of the Greek intelligence, and especially of that part of the race, Æolic and Ionic, which had made its home in Asia. But more than this, as to which of these two elements



was the more prominent, assertion is difficult, indeed impossible, and when we ask who wrote the poems, we get no convincing answer.

Whether or not a Homer wrote the Iliad is but one of the questions that divide scholars. The calm security with which students used to read in the chronological tables that the Trojan war began 1198 B. C. and ended with the fall of Troy in 1187, is wholly gone, and in its place has arisen uncertainty whether there was any war at all, while if there was one, its date is anything but fixed. The main authority for the war is the poem itself, although the account is in good part made up of unhistoric incidents. Yet when we remember that scientific statement was a thing as impossible at that time as the power to write an epic poem is now, we shall not be intimidated by the inexactness with which the story is told. Still, even with the best will in the world, it is not possible to go further than to affirm, at the most, more than the probability of some historic foundation for the poet's invention, and history is not a record of probabilities. The war, if it was ever waged, was one of the earliest of the long line of conflicts between the East and Europe, and it is possibly not a mere coincidence that the editing of the poems by order of Pisistratus, if it ever happened, should have taken place shortly before the great Persian



GOLD DIADEM FOUND AT HISSARLIK.  
(Composed of fine chains and leaves.)

war, when the Homeric poems helped to encourage the patriotism of the Greeks by recounting the glories of their ancestors. Some few writers indeed hold that only at this time were these epic poems brought into their present condition, that before then what was known to the ancients as Homer was very different from our Homer, and included all the abundant epic literature. This view is supported by the references of the older poets to Homer which are not to be found in our present texts. Yet this interesting suggestion obviously does not touch the question before us, the possible historical basis of the poems. The only real principle to guide the student here is this, that sooner or later, as Grote says, "the lesson must be learnt, hard and painful though it be, that no imaginable reach of critical acumen will of itself enable us to discriminate fancy from reality, in the absence of a tolerable stock of evidence." In other words, history is a science, which must be confined within the limits of observation. On the one hand, Dr. Schliemann, who is absolutely convinced that there is a fixed historical basis for the Iliad, is hard at work digging up what he asserts are the remains of that city over which scholars and archæologists are contending as warriors contended in the mythical past. As in much of the poem, the war is one of words, and ironical compliments and expressions not veiled in irony, are interchanged after a fashion that the Greek and Trojan heroes knew well. Besides these combatants there are other men who have distinctly shown that about the Trojan war there collected a number of Aryan myths, which appear elsewhere in other forms. Thus, Achilles, Paris, and Helen, are found in the Rig Veda as well as in the Iliad, and thus belong to a period preceding the separation of the Aryan nations. The whole story of the wrath of Achilles is told over again as well in the Nibelungenlied, and in its origin was a solar myth, a tale of the eternal conflict between night and day, which formed the basis of the Indo-European mythology. Yet even by the time when the Homeric poems were composed, these old myths had wholly lost their original significance for the poet; they were mere bits of legend no more conveying a notion of their remote beginning than do Grimm's Household Stories unfold their history to the children that read them. They were wholly obscure tales which clustered about the story of the Trojan war, in possibly much the same way that in the middle ages the Carolingian romance gathered floating traditions which were ascribed to Charlemagne, who was represented, for instance, as a crusader, although the crusades only began long after his death. Here again the solar myth reappeared, and about a man whose life and deeds are well known to us. If our only data about Charlemagne were the romances of which he is the hero, it is evident that the process of reconstructing



the historical basis would be a hopeless one, and in describing the campaigns of the Trojan war we are equally far afield. Yet, as the myths

with which Charlemagne is incrustured do not disprove his existence, those that surround Achilles do not terrify the investigators of Troy. While it is very likely that the questions that the poems bring up will outweigh the answers that archæology and linguistics can give, it is yet true that the rapidly growing supply of evidence is greatly widening our knowledge of the past. This additional information is gathered from the humblest and most varied sources; stray epithets already petrified before Homer used them, bits of pottery and all the miscellaneous collections of ornaments, arms and cooking utensils that have been dug up by energetic excavators, the lines of Homer and the relics of the ash heaps—combine to set before us a tolerably complete picture of a rude period just emerging from barbarism, and curiously compounded of squalor and splendor. Thus, the walls of the houses were adorned with sheets of metal, leather and carved ivory; the inner woodwork was cut into some ornamental shape, and polished; and while at an early period the floors of temples or of the richest buildings at least were inlaid with gold and silver, as was common in the East, most of the dwellings we may take to have had no floors at all, not even of wood, but to have left the bare earth uncovered. Moreover, on the ground



PREHISTORIC POTTERY FROM CYPRUS.  
(From Cernède's Excavations.)

of the hall where the wooers of Penelope used to gather, there lay all sorts of remnants of recently slaughtered beasts. The other parts were cooked in the same room, which had no special provision for the escape of the smoke, and "the sweet savor of the fat" was a most admired odor in the estimation of all. In front of this unsanitary but gorgeous house lay a dungheap; such at least was the condition of things near the house of Odysseus, and in the court-yard of Priam's palace.

What was gorgeous in this style of living came from the East; and the dress, the decoration, the treatment of the hair and beard were all modified by oriental fashions. The rich robes and drinking vessels came from Phœnician sources, as did the decorations of the arms and many of the ways of using them; for example, the dependence laid on chariots. Not all, however, were thus armed; the remote Locrians wore no helmets, and carried no shields or spears, but were equipped with bows and arrows. Only their leader Aias, the son of Oileus, was fully armed for close combat. From



GOLD RINGS FROM MYCENÆ.



GOLD SEAL RING FROM MYCENÆ.

the East, too, came the use of perfumes and cosmetics, the necessity of which was greater, because the habit of bathing had not been acquired. The practice was reserved for extraordinary occasions, after fighting or returning from a long journey. Further traces of prehistoric savageness are to be seen in the account that is given of the sacrifices offered up by Achilles at the funeral of Patroclus,



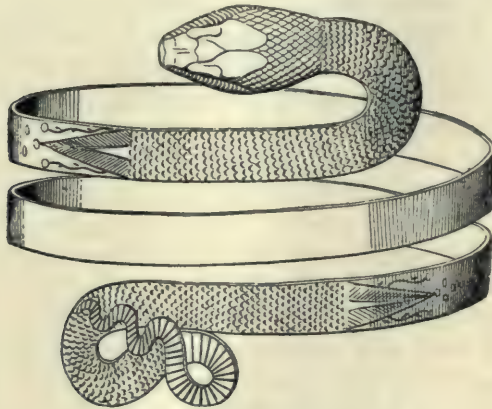
when he slaughtered twelve Trojan captives, four horses and two dogs.

Yet amid all this crudity and confusion, abundant forerunners of the peculiar qualities that distinguish the Hellenic spirit at the time of its classical perfection are yet clearly marked. Not only, as we have said, do the rich and harmonious language, and the varied charms of the hexameter indicate this, but we notice already the aversion to exaggeration, and the sensitiveness to physical beauty which always characterized the Greeks. The immortal description of Helen is one familiar instance; but it is not merely the sight of a beautiful woman that awakens this feeling: Achilles is filled with wonder at the aspect of Priam; all the Greeks crowd about the dead Hector and express their admiration of his beauty. There are a few descriptions of monsters, such as Briareus with his hundred arms, the giants Otus and Ephialtes, who at the age of nine were nine cubits broad and nine fathoms high, Scylla with her twelve feet and six heads, each with three rows of teeth "set thick and close, full of black breath," but these misshapen beings are for the most part not only outlying remote creatures, but possibly merely Oriental inventions that had found their way into Greek folk-lore. At any rate, they did not belong to the customary objects, and their number is small in comparison with the normal creations of Greek fancy, whose aspects and qualities indicated the same grace and beauty that was in later centuries to form the inimitable glory of Greek sculpture.

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* then have other qualities than those that fit them for a tilting-field for angry and derisive scholars, some of whom dig up forgotten facts with an eye solely to their value as mis-siles; and the reader of the *Iliad* can follow the varying fortunes of the war without being distracted by doubts concerning the historical foundation of the incidents narrated, or their possible importance as solar myths. Whatever our conclusions may be—and a vast number invite our acceptance—the poet or poets who sang, and the people who listened to the story of the wrath of Achilles and of the wanderings of Ulysses, believed in the truth of the immortal poems. The wealth of legend was to them at least history in the bud, and they gave to the singers the same confidence that all early nations give to those who celebrate their past glories; and indeed in civilized time it is not those who praise us most whom we are accustomed to doubt first.

The composition of these poems is the subject of an endless controversy; whether they were composed piecemeal and afterwards strung together, small bits being sung at any one time, or whether the whole long poems were by any chance recited at any great festival, we may not know with certainty; possibly the one custom followed the other.

What seems tolerably certain is that they were composed for recitation and not for reading. We are safe too in conjecturing that whatever its original form, the *Iliad*, for instance, grew into its present shape by enlargement, development and the bringing together of separate lays. The points of junction are not to be readily distinguished, and the broad swell of harmonious measure lifts the reader—and how much more readily a listener—over the incongruities and contradictions that have been discovered since the text has been put through the fine sieve of modern criticism. The inconsistencies are too many and too serious to be accounted for by any plea of natural oversight, and throughout it is the vividness of the separate scenes that command the highest admiration. Yet the separate strands are woven into a tolerably complete whole; the general reader is carried on without a chance to notice the puzzling questions that can be answered only by denying the single composition of the poem. It is hard for us to suppose that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were the sole epics, for we know how a striking success clearly indicates abundant competition, and it is easily to be believed that Homer surpassed the others and monopolized the praise, when we think of the prominence of Shakspeare in comparison with the other Elizabethan dramatists. Men have little interest in those who take the second prize.



POMPEIIAN BRACELET.



## CHAPTER II.—THE ILIAD.

- I. The Subject of the Poem—The Admiration felt for it—Its Fate at different Periods of Ancient and Modern History—Adaptations and Translations : Chapman, Pope Etc. II.—An Analysis of the Poem. III.—Some of the Qualities of the Heroes : their Unconventional Timidity ; their Relations to the Gods. IV.—The Greek Epic Treatment compared with that of other Races. V.—The Illustrative Extracts.

### I.

WHATEVER may have been the origin of the Iliad and the Odyssey, these two poems stand unrivaled in the world. The reputation that they won in Greece has extended itself among all the races whose civilization rests remotely on this prehistoric past. At the very dawn these two poems stand, in their ancient glory unapproached, as if to justify those men who look back to the past as a golden age. What then are the qualities of these epics? The Iliad recounts some incidents of the siege of Troy, not the capture of the city, though that is clearly foreshadowed in the poem, but the story of the wrath of Achilles in the tenth and last year of the siege. So much may be said, without discussing the inconsistencies that are clearly manifest. This siege of Troy had been undertaken by the Greeks in order to bring back Helen, the wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta, who had been carried off by Paris, son of Priam, King of Troy. The love of Helen had been promised him by Aphrodite, when she, Here, the wife of Zeus, and Athene, had chosen him to decide which was the most beautiful of the three. Paris at that time was a shepherd, although a son of Priam ; at his birth the oracles had announced future perils that he would bring to his people ; his mother, Hecuba, had dreamed before his birth that she brought forth a flaming hand. In consequence he was exposed on Mount Ida ; but the oracles were not to be disappointed in that way, and when Aphrodite bribed him to assign the palm of perfect beauty to her—Here offered him future power ; Athene, wisdom—by promising him the love of the most beautiful woman in the world, he readily made his decision in her favor. This most beautiful woman was Helen, and after being acknowledged by his father, he set sail for Greece, where he was received at the court of Menelaus, and here he verified the evil omens by running off with Helen. Priam received the guilty pair, and Greece joined its forces

to punish the foreigner's insult. For ten years preparations were made; Menelaus appealed at once to his brother Agamemnon, King of Argos and Mycenæ, and these two sons of Atreus incited their neighbors to seek revenge. While at Mycenæ recent excavations have brought to light many proofs of a powerful civilization that belong to prehistoric times, we find in the *Iliad* a curious instance of the existence of an old and wide-spread legend in the scepter which Agamemnon carried, having inherited it from the king of the gods, for whom it had been

made by Hephaistos. Zeus had given it to *Hermes*, *Hermes* to *Pelops*, the house to which Agamemnon belonged. This scepter, with its divine origin, reminds us of the sword *Durandal* which *Charlemagne* gave to *Roland*; of *Arthur's Excalibur*, which were similar magic insignia.

Not all the Greek heroes were anxious to go to the wars, and their efforts to avoid the unpleasant duty are reconciled with the simplicity of the race. They tried to bribe Agamemnon to exempt them; *Odysseus* feigned mad-

ness, but his device was detected and he joined the army. There was no lack of heroes here, and their bravery seems incontestable when the reluctance of the others has been frankly admitted. Of these heroes was *Achilles*, the son of the sea-goddess, *Thetis*, by *Peleus*, a mortal, the son of *Æacus*. Around him are gathered all the admirable qualities of the ideals of the time when the poems were composed. He is strong and brave, beautiful in person, generous, proud, a true friend, and a relentless enemy. His fierceness in war is tempered by his love for his friends, and the mere raw thirst for the conflict is elevated by eloquence, for even in this remote antiquity the Greek possessed the ready tongue for which he was



THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS.



afterwards famous. There is a pathetic side to Achilles as well, because his early death in the war has been previously announced, and he has chosen it in preference to a life of inglorious ease, which had been offered to him. This latent fate that awaits him lends dignity to the whole poem.

The heroes, after ten years of preparation, met at Aulis, on the coast of Bœotia, to sail together to Troy. The first time that they put forth, they lost their way and were obliged to return, and before they could start again it was necessary that Agamemnon should placate Artemis, whom he had offended. This story, however, does not belong here, but to the discussion of the later tragedies. Once more the armament started; and when it had reached Tenedos, Menelaus and Odysseus proceeded to Troy, and asked the Trojan king to return Helen and the treasures taken at the same time; the Trojans declined, so the Greeks once more moved on. As has been said above, the poem opens in the tenth year of the siege. The Greeks had ravaged the country outside of the walls of Troy, but were powerless against its fortifications. They were encamped outside, with their



BIRTH OF ACHILLES.

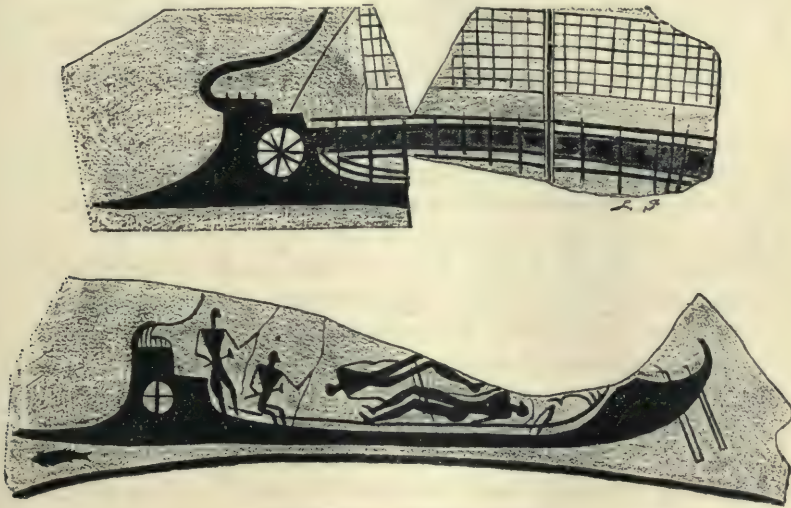
galleys drawn up on the shore. There had been many fights between the two armies, when the Trojans sallied forth from behind the walls. Such, then, was the general condition of affairs, which was perfectly familiar to the Greeks when they heard the poem, as was also a much larger fund of legend bearing on the same subject. The whole story was in every one's mind, and in choosing a part, the author, whom for convenience we call Homer, in taking an episode of the war, was free to leave the whole great story untouched, and the part that he chose was that announced in the first line:

"Sing, goddess, the wrath of Achilles, son of Peleus."

The wrath of Achilles and the evil that it wrought on the Greeks when deprived of his services; the death of Patroclus, which was the result of his anger; his return to the field, which the death of his young friend inspired, and the slaying of Hector: such is the whole story of the *Iliad*. This use of an episode of a greater tale distinguishes the *Iliad* from every other epic poem of ancient or modern

times. Even the *Odyssey* narrates a full, complete story. The *Æneid* is still more packed with a complex message, and the modern imitations have kept close to this model in at least this respect. The Sanskrit epic, the *Mahabharata*, is even a more marked instance of the same tendency. It was left to the Greeks alone to tell the simplest story in the most impressive way. Every thing else about the *Iliad* has been copied with greater or less success, but it has always been held necessary to tell a great story in a long poem, and artifice has taken the place of art.

Fortunately the poem lives apart from its historic or mythological meaning. That Achilles may have been a solar hero doomed to a brief career, whose glory was adapted to some brave fight in a war with



BOATS, FROM ARCHAIC VASES.

the Asiatics, is a matter which no more perplexes the reader of the poem than does the success of the investigators who find in "Hamlet" a reappearance of the old legend of night and day, confuse our enjoyment of the play. Even in Homer's time the myth survived only as a tale; its ancestry was wholly lost, and Homer thought of such remote meaning as little as Shakspeare did. The two names belong together, for nowhere outside of Shakspeare do we find such closeness of observation, grandeur of expression, and comprehension of human nature. Homer is the poet of an early age, to be sure, but of one already old in thought and experience.

To what extent the lavish use of epithets is a survival of an old custom is uncertain. At any rate they are used with a freedom that



is now lost ; they serve but to lend vividness to the object described. Now epithets are more frequently characteristic of the ingenuity of the man who uses them : they are not direct aids to our comprehension of the poem so much as illustrations of the poet's ingenuity. The difference between the simple manner of Homer and the more sophisticated formalism of a time of advanced civilization enormously complicates the question of translating him, and to express his joyous dignity has been found as hard and as tempting a problem as the utterance of any of the emotions of human life. Just as every generation is confronted with the old novelty of the delight of life, the present charm and future fate of beauty and strength, which has to be sung anew for those who feel that only now does the world exist, so do the great classics stand as eternally tempting subjects for men who wish to convey their charm to readers. The work is continually done over again, for at the most but one or two generations are satisfied with any rendering. Every translation has but a temporary life ; it is best when it utters its meaning after the fashion which the time most approves, and when new forms appear it is succeeded by new attempts to say the same thing in the later language. Consequently, the student will learn about the various influences that have gone to the making of English literature by comparing the various versions.

At the time of the Renaissance the interest in Homer, which had slumbered during the middle ages, in the general darkness of the period, awoke to new life. After the fall of Rome, the study of Greek had ceased ; and with the revival of letters, scholars at once perceived that in literature at least all roads led to Greece. Petrarch's reverent admiration for the manuscript of Homer, no word of which he could read ; his eagerness to study the Greek language ; the delight with which he and Boccaccio read the *Iliad* in a bald Latin translation, foreboded the future importance of the poem, even if it may be said that it also indicates the manner in which Greek was to be known through a Latin medium. Throughout the middle ages the fame of the Trojan war had survived in a maimed and crippled form, resting principally on the accounts of Dictys of Crete, and of Dares the Phrygian, which were alleged contemporary records of the siege by participants, translated into bad Latin from now lost Greek originals. Dictys had fought, or asserted that he had fought, upon the Greek side ; Dares had been among the Trojans ; and since, in imitation of Rome, every country in modern Europe traced its lineage back to Troy, Dares was the favorite. It is in his arid record that Troilus first comes into prominence. Before that he is a mere name ; but in this account he is an important personage, as we see him in Chaucer's "*Troilus and Creseide*," and in Shakspeare's "*Troilus and Cressida*." These

later forms, however, belong more directly to Benoît de Sainte-More (*Roman de Troie*), in which medieval and classical notions and traditions are curiously jumbled together, as in the English imitations. A similar vitality of the spirit of the middle ages is to be seen in the French mystery, written about the middle of the fifteenth century, the *Mystère de la Destruction de Troie-la-Grant*, by J. Millet, a still more curious maltreatment of the ancient story. This, although a century earlier than Shakspeare's play, was a century later than Petrarch's re-discovery of Homer, and with the spread of the Renaissance there appeared great hunger for a true rendering of Homer. The first complete English translation of the Iliad was that of George Chapman, which began to appear in 1596 or 1598, and was finished some time between 1609 and 1611. This had been preceded by a translation of ten books of the Iliad, from a metrical French version, by one Arthur Hall, in 1581. To judge from the single line quoted in Warton's "History of English Poetry," the field was left well open before Chapman. This line, the first of the poem:

"I thee beseech, O goddess milde, the hatefull hate to plaine,"

has left students willing to carry their researches no further. Chapman's version shares with every one that has ever been made the misfortune of not being Homer, but it has some of the Homeric qualities in its impetuous and vivid force. It at least runs on and carries the reader with it, although too often Chapman introduces the conceits of his own time which are far removed from the simplicity of the great original. Abundant inaccuracies, too, reward the man who is searching for faults. Nor is this surprising: he tells us in the preface that he translated the last twelve books in fifteen weeks, which is at the rate of about eighty lines a day, at a time when the study of Greek in England was in its infancy—Groeyn was the first to teach it at Oxford in 1491; and Sir John Cheke at Cambridge about 1540—and there were but few of the aids to the student that now abound. With all his obvious faults, however, his fervor has left him the favorite of the poets at least, and that is perhaps the most honorable immortality that the writer of verse can have. Dryden tells us that Waller could never read his translation without transport. Pope, on the other hand, although he gives Chapman credit for "a daring fiery spirit . . . which is something like what one might imagine Homer himself could have written before he arrived at years of discretion," yet says that "his expression is involved in fustian," and condemns his work as a "loose and rambling" paraphrase. Indeed Chapman's manifest errors were peculiarly obnoxious to the age of Pope. It was not until the revival of interest in the Elizabethan writers that appeared in the reaction against the spirit that animated Pope, that



justice was done Chapman. The most glowing expression of this late-born enthusiasm is in Keats's beautiful sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer." Chapman imagined it to be "a pedantical and absurd affectation to turn his author word for word," and that a translator "must adorn" the original "with words, and such a style and form of oration as are most apt for the language into which they are converted," and this theory led him far astray. A certain trace of it is at the bottom of every translator's soul, whether he seek the smooth turning of Homer which was Pope's effort; or he, like Cowper, imitate the Miltonic inversions; or like many more recent men try to be dignified by being slow. For one thing every translation is in some degree a failure, because our language has by mere use lost the original freshness of the Homeric Greek, and the necessary literalness conveys different connotations to our minds. The epithets are often worn threadbare; their repetition, which originally was a natural thing, falls on ears accustomed to greater artifice, and every evidence of the difficulty is exposed to the charge of inaccuracy. After countless attempts, to describe and estimate which would require a volume, the present generation is finding its completest satisfaction in literal prose translation. Even here, however, it is a remote and conventional prose that undertakes to give us the majesty of the Homeric verse; it is, after all, a frank avowal that the task is impossible. Yet through all the muffling which time and the conditions of translation have imposed, Homer stands out immortally young and vivid. His story of ceaseless and numberless battles finds ever delighted readers who never weary; who find the tale told with dignity and the loftiness of the grand style. Here is a brief abstract of the events.

## II.

As we saw, the poem describes events in the tenth year of the siege of Troy. Chryses, a priest of Apollo, had entreated Agamemnon to return his daughter Chryseis, who had been captured, but his entreaties are of no avail; he is turned away with contempt. In return for this insult Apollo sends a pestilence among the Greeks, and Achilles convokes an assembly to deliberate on the best way of appeasing the offended deity. Calchas, "most excellent far of augurs," declares that the favor of the god can be won again only by Agamemnon's surrender of the damsel to her father. Agamemnon is enraged by this counsel, especially when Achilles urges him to follow it. The discussion grows hot, and only the advice of Pallas Athene, who suddenly appears before him, restrains Achilles from drawing his sword upon

Agamemnon; but he threatens, nevertheless, to leave the army and to take himself home to Phthia with his forces. Agamemnon consents to send back Chryseis with rich gifts to her father, but in her place he takes Briseis, a female slave who had become the property of Achilles



SEIZURE OF BRISEIS. (*From a Vase Painting.*)

and to whom he was much attached. Achilles in his anger wanders by the shore of the sea, and asks his mother Thetis, the daughter of the sea-god Nereus, to contrive some revenge for him. She appears and promises to petition Zeus to let the Greeks suffer for their wrongdoing by bitter defeats, and she mourns the harsh fate that has granted her son so brief and perturbed a life. Meanwhile the messengers from Agamemnon, with Odysseus at their head, proceed to Chryses and restore to him his daughter; they further prepare a sumptuous sacrifice for the offended god and entreat his good offices: in this they are successful and Apollo relents. Twelve days later—the gods meanwhile being absent in Ethiopia, at the uttermost edge of the



world—Thetis hastens to Olympus, and beseeches Zeus to grant vengeance to her son, and Zeus promises, with a nod at which all Olympus trembles, that he will let the Trojans be victorious until Achilles has received satisfaction. But Here, who had observed Thetis's presence, bitterly reproaches Zeus, who bids her hold her peace; and all the gods are troubled. Hephaistos, however, restores good feeling. (Book I.) The next night Zeus sends a deceptive dream to Agamemnon which tempts him to renew the conflict by a false promise of victory. In consequence Agamemnon the next morning summons the Achaians (the name applied then to the Greeks) to an assembly, and to test their opinions urges a return to their homes. The excited multitudes rush to their galleys, but Odysseus withstands them and induces them to go back to the assembly. Here he denounces the insolence of Thersites, to the delight of all who are present, and urges Agamemnon to enter the fight, before which a meal is taken and a sacrifice is offered to Zeus. Then follows the catalogue of the ships, in which the galleys, the commanders and the tribes of both armies are enumerated. (Book II.) When the Greeks and Trojans are in battle array, Paris steps forth to open the fight, but gives ground before Menelaus. Stung by Hector's reproaches, he challenges Menelaus to single combat for the possession of Helen; Menelaus accepts for his part, and asks that a sacrifice should be offered and that Priam should be called to the battlefield to pledge the oath. The aged king is looking down from the Skaian gate upon the battlefield with a number of venerable companions, and while there they are joined by Helen, to whom the king points out and names the different Greek leaders. From this place he is summoned to the field, and an agreement is made that to the conqueror shall belong Helen and all her treasures. The duel begins and Menelaus is victorious, but Aphrodite conveys Paris to his palace, where Helen is, while Agamemnon announces Menelaus the winner and demands the observance of the compact. (Book III.) In the council of the gods, Zeus, at Here's request, determines the fall of Troy. Athene is sent down to instigate a treacherous renewal of hostilities, and she persuades the Trojan Pandarus to shoot an arrow at Menelaus. After the truce is thus broken, Agamemnon goes about encouraging the Achaians to a renewal of the fray and the battle begins. (Book IV.) Diomed, who is endowed by Athene with resistless might, performs wonderful deeds; he plunges into the thickest hordes of the Trojans, slaying Pandarus and wounding Æneas, whom Aphrodite undertook to remove from the field, but she is herself wounded by Diomed and she returns to Olympus. Apollo carries Æneas, still pursued by Diomed, to his temple on the height of Pergamos. Ares now hastens to aid the Trojans, and before

him and Hector the Greeks begin to give ground. Athene and Here descend from Olympus to take part in the battle, and Diomed, encouraged, and supported by Athene, wounds even Ares. (Book V.) Hector goes into the city to ask his mother Hecuba to entreat of Athene aid for the Trojans; meanwhile Diomed and Glaucus meet, but recognize each other as guest-friends. While Hecuba prays to Athene for aid, Hector goes to Paris to urge him to come forth again to battle; and then he makes his way to his own house, and then to the Skaian gate, where he meets and consoles his wife Andromache and commends his son Astyanax to the care of the gods. Having done this he returns with Paris to the battlefield. (Book VI.) When there, Hector challenges the bravest of the Greeks to single combat, and they draw lots to see which shall face the Trojan leader. The lot falls on Ajax Telamon, who joyfully begins the fight, which prolongs itself, with varying success, till night-fall, when the heralds separate the two combatants, who exchange gifts and depart to their respective camps. After the evening meal, Nestor advises that on the next day there be no fighting, that they burn the dead and build about the camp. At the same time in Troy Antenor proposes to return Helen, but Paris refuses. The next morning, after a truce is determined, both sides pay the last rites to their dead, and the Greeks build their barricade, at which Poseidon complains to Zeus. (Book VII.) At the beginning of the next day Zeus forbids all interference of the gods in the war. The conflict goes on, but remains undecided until noon, then fate determines the success of the Trojans, and the Greeks are driven back behind their intrenchment. Here and Athene wish to go to their aid, but Zeus sends Iris with a message to prevent them. Hector and the Trojans pass the night by their watchfires before the Greek encampment. (Book VIII.) Agamemnon, despairing of success, speaks in the assembly of the leaders in favor of flight, but is opposed by Diomed as well as by Nestor, by whose advice it is determined to send ambassadors to conciliate Achilles. Those chosen are Odysseus, Ajax and Phoinix, the former teacher of Achilles; yet their entreaties are vain; Achilles remains obdurate and says that until Hector reaches his ships he shall not raise his hand. Phoinix remains with Achilles while the others take back the sad tidings. (Book IX.) The next night, Agamemnon and Menelaus, who are unable to sleep, arise and wake up the other Greek leaders to take counsel together in their distress. It is decided that Diomed and Odysseus shall reconnoiter within the Trojan line and find out their plans. On their way thither they meet a Trojan spy, Dolon, whom they slay, after learning all that he had to tell; and then they proceed to the camp of the Thracian prince Rhesus, who had but



newly come to the war. Him they kill with twelve of his companions, and they carry off his horses to the Greek camp, where they are warmly received. (Book X.) The next morning the fighting is renewed; the Greeks advance victoriously until Agamemnon is wounded and withdraws. Hector sweeps all before him; Diomed, Odysseus and other Greek leaders are wounded and forced back to the ships; Achilles sends Patroclus to inquire of Nestor about the condition of the Greeks; Nestor bemoans the state of affairs and asks Patroclus to persuade Achilles to take part in the fight, or at least to borrow the hero's armor and return to the field. (Book XI.) The Achaians are driven back by Hector and the Trojans within the encampment about their ships, at which point Hector makes the Trojan horsemen dismount and charge against the walls in five lines. Despite the bravest resistance, especially on the part of the two Ajaxes, Sarpedon tears down the breastwork, Hector breaks through the gate with a huge stone, and the Trojans rush in over the walls and through the breach. (Book XII.) While Zeus for a season withdraws his attention from the conflict, Poseidon, disguised as Kalchas, the augur, encourages the Greeks; the two Ajaxes drive back Poseidon from the gateway. Idomeneus and Meriones, Antilochos and Menelaus offer courageous resistance on the left of the line; at last, Hector masses together the bravest of the Trojans and advances victoriously. (Book XIII.) Nestor steps out of his tent, disturbed by the noise and confusion, and meets the wounded leaders, Agamemnon, Diomed and Odysseus, who are about to watch the fray and to encourage the dejected Achaians. In order that Poseidon may lend them his aid, Here borrows from Aphrodite her magic girdle, and distracts Zeus from the observance of terrestrial things until he falls asleep. In the battle, a stone hurled by Ajax Telamon knocks down Hector, who is carried off insensible and the Trojans retreat. (Book XIV.) But Zeus awakens and sees what has happened: and in his wrath he commands Here to call Iris and Apollo to remove Poseidon from the battle, and to give new strength to Hector, who revives and drives back the Achaians over the intrenchments to the ships. There a terrible fight rages; Ajax, leaping from deck to deck, repels the assaults of the Trojans with a great pike, and Hector throws firebrands into the ship of Protesilaos. (Book XV.) In this stress, Patroclus begs Achilles to lend him his armor to wear against the Trojans; and Achilles gives his consent, on the condition that Patroclus shall return as soon as the Trojans are driven back from the ships. Then Achilles prepares his forces for the fight, dividing them into five bands, and encourages them for the battle. Patroclus drives back the Trojans from the burning ship of Ajax and kills



FIGHT AT THE SHIPS.  
(*Vase Painting.*)



Sarpedon, the son of Zeus, who gives the body to Sleep and Death to carry to his home in Lykia. Then Patroclus, against the commands of Achilles, presses on to the very walls of Troy, but is driven back by Apollo, who also disarms him, and Hector kills him. (Book XVI.) A long contest follows for the possession of the body of Patroklos, whose armor Hector takes and puts on himself, but at last the corpse is saved from the Trojans, who follow the stubborn retreat of the Greeks. (Book XVII.) Achilles receives from Antilochos the news of his friend's death, and gives way to such uncontrollable grief that his mother, Thetis, hastens to him, and tries to comfort him by the promise of new armor from Hephaistos. The fight for the body of Patroclus is resumed until the voice of Achilles drives back the Trojans in terror. Patroclus is then carried to the tent of Achilles, where the Achaians mourn for him during the whole night; then the body is bathed and anointed and placed on a bier. At the request of Thetis, Hephaistos makes a new suit of armor for Achilles; the shield of which is especially a masterpiece. Thetis hastens with the arms to her mourning son. (Book XVIII.) Achilles laments aloud for Patroklos, and his grief breaks forth anew at the sight of the new armor. Thetis sprinkles ambrosia on the corpse to preserve it from corruption. Achilles at once summons an assembly, to which all come joyfully. Achilles and Agamemnon become reconciled, the latter recognizing his error, and he offers anew to Achilles, Briseis and rich gifts. Achilles is anxious to begin the fight for revenge at once; but, following the advice of Odysseus, they determine to refresh the men with food and drink and that chosen youths shall bring Briseis and the gifts to Achilles. This is done with solemnity. Briseis bursts into loud mourning for Patroclus, and Achilles refuses food and drink before he has revenged his friend. When he again laments with a loud outcry, Zeus bids Athene to strengthen him with nectar and ambrosia, the food of the gods. The Achaians march forth again to battle, Achilles leading in his rich armor. As he steps into his chariot, his horse Xanthos warns him that the day of his death is near. (Book XIX.) The armies are arrayed against each other, and Zeus calls a council of the gods to declare that they are now free to take part in the conflict. They consequently hasten to the battlefield: at their arrival the earth trembles so violently that there is terror in Hades. Here, Athene, Poseidon, Hephaistos and Hermes stand on the side of the Achaians; Aphrodite, Apollo, Artemis and Ares aid the Trojans. The battle begins, and Æneas, as the first of the Trojans, goes forward to meet Achilles; he would have been killed, however, if Poseidon had not taken him away in order that the royal race of Troy should not be extinguished. Achilles makes great havoc among the Trojans.

(Book XX.) As the defeated Trojans are retreating in confusion from the battle, some to the city, and some plunging into the river Xanthos, Achilles pursues the last into the stream, where he performs more deeds of valor and takes captive twelve young men as an atonement for the slain Patroclus. The enraged Xanthos, together with Simoeis, the other river, rush upon Achilles with great violence, but Here sends Hephaistos against the streams; he turns the banks and the swollen waters in their bed. The gods take part in the battle; Athene wounds Ares and casts Aphrodite to the ground; Artemis is injured by Here, and hastens lamenting to Zeus; finally the gods return to Olympus. Achilles hastens to the city, the gates of which are thrown open to admit the fleeing Trojans; Achilles can not prevent this, being led to one side by Apollo in the guise of Agenor.



ACHILLES AND HECTOR BEFORE THE SKAIAN GATE.

(Book XXI.) After the Trojans have fled into the city, Hector, in spite of the lamentations of his parents, remains outside before the Skaian gate, awaiting Achilles. When the Greek hero approaches, however, Hector flees thrice around the walls of Troy. Since the golden balance that, held in the hand of Zeus, foretold Hector's death, Apollo



ACHILLES WITH HECTOR'S BODY DRAGGED AT THE CHARIOT.

deserted him, and Athene lured him with wiles to his destruction. He stands to face Achilles, whose lance pierces his throat, and he falls. He has strength but to beg Achilles not to disgrace his corpse, and then when that request is refused, he dies. The Greeks gather in amazement at the noble stature and beauty of Hector, while Achilles rejoices in his vengeance, and prepares insults to the corpse. He fastens the body by the feet to his chariot, and drags Hector, with his head in the dust, to the ships. His father and mother watch this



sad ride with despair, and Andromache, who had no suspicion of her husband's death, when she hears their outcry, hastens to the tower ; she sinks to the ground insensible, and utters the most heart-rending lamentations. (Book XXII.) The Achaians return to their camp ; Achilles and his hordes resume their mourning for Patroclus, driving three times about the corpse, and then partaking of the funeral feast. The next night the shade of Patroclus appears to Achilles in his sleep



IRIS, MESSENGER OF THE GODS.

to ask for fitting funeral rites, and that the remains of both might rest together. The following day a great pyre is built, upon which the body is laid, and solemn sacrifices are offered, including four horses and the twelve Trojan youths. When first the fire is set, it will not burn, but Achilles prays to the north and west winds, which fan the flames into a blaze. The next morning the bones are deposited in an urn, which is placed in a mound of earth. Thereupon Achilles arranges games, for which he offers valuable prizes : there are chariot races, boxing, wrestling, foot-races, and exercises in throwing the spear, etc. (Book XXIII.)

After the sports are over the Achaians betake themselves to their tents for supper and sleep, but the grief of Achilles allows him no rest. The next morning he drags the body of Hector around the mound of Patroclus, but Apollo has pity on him even in death, and covers him with his golden ægis, that Achilles may not tear him when he drags him.

Twelve days later the same deity in the council of the gods complains of this ill-treatment of the Trojan hero's body, and Zeus, in spite of the opposition, summons Thetis, who communicates to Achilles the wish of the gods that he give back the corpse for an indemnity. At the same time Zeus sends Iris to Priam ; she finds him and his whole household plunged in grief ; she bids him go to Achilles himself and

arrange the ransom. Priam at once decides to do this, in spite of his wife's entreaties. He drives out of the house the inquisitive Trojans, and orders his sons to make his chariot ready. It is laden with costly gifts, and he, with Hecuba, prays to Zeus for a safe return, which is promised him by the appearance of an eagle on the right hand above the city. Thereupon he gets into his chariot and drives off, accompanied by his herald. Hermes leads him to the tent of Achilles, where he woefully entreats for his son's body and a truce of eleven days. Achilles consents, receives him as a guest over night, and sends him back to Troy with his son's body the next morning. Cassandra is the first to descry him; the people stream forth to meet him, and the body is carried into the palace, where Andromache, Hecuba and Helen in turn lament. On the tenth day occur the funeral rites. (Book XXIV.)

### III.

Such is the brief and meager outline of the great poem, which suffers when reported in this fashion from the fact that the adventures and incidents lack all the covering which the poet's grace threw over them. It becomes clear, however, that the poem is practically a unit; one story, that of the wrath of Achilles, is intended to be told from its beginning to the end, but whether by a single poet or by a number whose separate works were more or less harmoniously welded into one whole, is the great question; the weight of evidence and the common opinion are inclining toward the latter view. Possibly what seems to modern readers most remote is the personal interference of the gods in the conflict, with their inevitable control of events. Yet, it must be remembered that their influence and backing were felt by both sides, and that the possession of their support was as legitimate an aid as human bravery or military skill, or any other advantage. The gods were but men and women only to be distinguished from human beings by their possession of immortality and a few fairy-like qualities, such as the power of becoming, and making others invisible. While the simplicity with which the gods are treated is a striking thing in the poem, we observe equal directness in the description of the heroes. Indeed, although the society that is pictured in the *Iliad* is an aristocratic one, in which princes and leaders hold a position like that of the principal characters in our opera, and the bulk of the armies is made up of an indistinguishable array of men like the chorus,—no private soldier coming into prominence except incidentally to swell the list of the hero's victories,—yet, on the other hand, these heroes are not fantastic beings with imaginary qualities; they are in fact personifications of the



various conflicting tribes. We have already seen that Odysseus did his best to avoid going to the war, and once there the heroes were not without repugnance to the fray. Achilles and Hector both knew what fear was,—Achilles, when the river rose against him, in the twenty-first book, and “terribly around Achilles arose his tumultuous wave, and the stream smote violently against his shield, nor availed he to stand firm upon his feet. Then he grasped a tall fair-grown elm, and it fell uprooted and tore away all the bank, and reached over the fair river bed with its thick shoots, and stemmed the river himself, falling all within him: and Achilles, struggling out of the eddy, made haste to fly over the plain with his swift feet, for he was afraid.” Hector, brave as he was (Book XXIV.), was seized with trembling “as he was aware of him, nor endured he to abide in his place, but left the gates behind him and fled in fear.” Agamemnon, too, at the beginning of Book IX., in the assembly “stood up weeping like unto a fountain of dark water that from a beetling cliff poureth down its black stream; even so with deep groaning he spake amid the Argives and said: ‘My friends, leaders and captains of the Argives, Zeus, son of Kronos, hath bound me with might in grievous blindness of soul; hard of heart is he, for that erewhile he promised and gave his pledge that not till I had laid waste well-walled Ilios should I depart; but now hath planned a cruel wile, and biddeth me return in dishonor to Argos with the loss of many of my folk. Such meseemeth is the good pleasure of most mighty Zeus, that hath laid low the heads of many cities, yea and shall lay low; for his is highest power. So come, even as I shall bid let us all obey; let us flee with our ships to our dear native land, for now we shall never take wide-wayed Troy.’” Fear, then, was something that entered into the composition of a Homeric hero, although it has been carefully expunged from the heroes of later epics. Modern authors have been afraid to confess timidity, and in the effort to outdo Homer a great deal has been done in the way of accumulating heroic qualities. Indeed many of the facts chronicled in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* show how truly caution was a characteristic of the men who have served the civilized world as models of heroes. Echebolos offered Agamemnon a fine mare to win his permission to stay at home. None of them have a real instinctive love of fighting such as we find in the great German poems. They all regarded war as a pitiable business, only to be endured for the sake of some ultimate benefit. In the second book of the *Iliad*, after the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles, it is only with great difficulty that the Achaians are again persuaded to fight. When Agamemnon proposes to abandon the siege, his fellow-warriors are delighted with the prospect of peace and of returning home, and are only prevented from abandoning every thing by the

interposition of Athene. Then, too, when they get into battle, they experience unheroic terrors; wailing would arise from the ranks of the Achaians. When the Trojans got among the ships, the Greeks cried because they fancied that they were doomed to destruction. Odysseus, when, in *Odyssey*, XI., he is speaking of the men in the wooden horse, says that the other princes and counselors of the Danaans wiped away their tears, "and the limbs of each one trembled beneath him, but never once did I see thy son's [Neoptolemus, son of Achilles] fair face wax pale, nor did he wipe away the tears from his cheeks," and in fact he comported himself with admirable bravery. It is more likely, to be sure, that the poet drew his pictures of warfare in a time of peace, when the original martial ardor was modified by Asiatic luxury, when riper cultivation had weakened the early military enthusiasm. Yet, another part of this unconventionality may possibly be ascribed to the innate sensitiveness of even the most warlike Greeks. Their delicate natures were quick to perceive and dread peril that would be scorned by a ruder people. In the *Mahabharata*, the great Sanskrit epic, we come across bits here and there that show the same unconventional treatment that we find in Homer. Thus, Yudhishtira, in his fight with Drona, being sore pressed, "mounted a fleet horse and galloped out of sight; for it is no shame for a Kahatriya [or member of the military caste] to fly away from a Brâhman [or priest]." In general, however, these abnormal heroes are killing numerous elephants when not outdoing Bombastes Furioso. In the same poem we also find the continual interference of the gods, as in the Greek epic. In the *Iliad* (Book XVII.) Menelaus says: "When a man against the power of heaven is fain to fight with another whom God exalteth, then swiftly rolleth on him mighty woe. Therefore shall none of the Danaans be wroth with me though he behold me giving place to Hector, since he warreth with gods upon his side. But if I might somewhere find Ajax of the loud war-cry, and then both together would we go and be mindful of battle even were it against the power of heaven, if haply we might save his dead for Achilles, Peleus' son: that were best among these ills."

#### IV.

This is but one of the many times that the intervention of the gods is spoken of; and in the *Mahabharata* they are no less active in aiding their friends. Krishna appears as inevitably as if the poem were a tragedy, and curiously enough he frequently counsels unfair conduct to the heroes. Thus the three leading heroes on the losing side come to their end by foul means. One, Drona, is the victim of a lie which



his human ally Yudhishtira refuses to tell. It seems that Krishna told Yudhishtira that if he told Drona that his son Aswatthāman was dead, that warrior would fall an easy victim. But Yudhishtira refused to compass his enemy's destruction in that way. Krishna, not to be daunted, has an elephant named Aswatthāman put to death, and another hero told Drona that Aswatthāman was dead. Drona felt sure that the statement was inaccurate, and in his wrath he slaughtered ten thousand cavalry and twenty thousand infantry—such is the Rabelaisian invention of the Sanskrit poet—and determined to ask Yudhishtira, who was known to be a perfectly honest man. Yudhishtira meant to answer: "Aswatthāman is dead; not indeed the man, but the elephant," but as soon as he had uttered the first part of the sentence Krishna and Arjuna sounded their war-shells, and Drona could not hear the explanatory words, and the god's prophecy was soon fulfilled. Karna met his end when he was trying to raise his chariot wheel that had stuck in the earth, and he imagined that according to the laws of fair fighting he was safe from attack, but Krishna's counsels prevailed; and Duryodhana was mortally wounded by a foul blow with a mace, again at Krishna's instigation. These wiles may be compared with those which are to be found in the *Iliad*, when Hector's death is only brought about by a similar device, but while both belong to literature to be sure, the Sanskrit epic has the portentous clumsiness of a prehistoric, long vanished mammal, who soon perished among the unfittest.

It may not be unfair to say that the same directness of vision that enabled Homer to perceive that even brave men knew what fear was, inspired his frank statement regarding lapses from truth. Professor Max Müller, in his "*India: What can It Teach Us?*" makes it very clear that truthfulness is not, as some have maintained, the exclusive property of the Germanic civilization. Indeed, Yudhishtira's reputation, as just cited, is something that few Greek heroes could match, for Achilles is the only leading one who does not disregard veracity. Pallas Athene is full of deceit, and Odysseus, her favorite, is interesting to her on account of his infinite capacity for misrepresenting facts. Odysseus, XIII., she thus addresses him: "Crafty must he be, and knavish, who would outdo thee in all manner of guile, even if it were a god encountered thee. Hardy man, subtle of wit, of guile insatiate, so thou wast not even in thine own country to cease from thy sleights and knavish words, which thou lovest from the bottom of thine heart! But come, no more let us tell of these things, being both of us practiced in deceits, for that thou art of all men far the first in counsel and discourse, and I in the company of all the gods win renown for my wit and wile."

We see that the gods deceive one another as freely as do the men. The quick-wittedness of Odysseus made him the representative of one of the ideals of the Hellenic race, as Achilles, with his bravery, was of another; and the qualities, it may be fair to say, are correlative, for timidity begets deceit. They at least belong to an unconventional condition of mind, in which men were not supported by abstract principles, as is undoubtedly the case with their successors in later times, when, even if absolute truthfulness is rare, conventional honors are paid it. Yet the frankness of Homer in mentioning these opinions savors of neither cowardice nor dishonesty. Hypocrisy is peculiar to races which set great store by truth. Whatever may be said of the Greeks, they certainly can not be called hypocrites. Throughout this poem, as throughout their whole literature, their moderation and perfect sanity are conspicuous. Just as Homer saw that quick-wittedness was a striking quality of his fellow-countrymen, and described it as he saw it, he described the various incidents of the poem without misrepresentation. The Mahabharata is full of what to us appears gross exaggeration: one hero, for example, is wounded by so many arrows that they formed a couch that held him up as he lay on their points slowly dying. In the Persian epic, the Shah-Namah, Rustem, wrings the hand of an enemy with such force that he squeezes his nails off; but the Greek author never attempts to let the grandiose take the place of the grand, to ennoble his heroes by making them do the impossible. All the fighting in the Mahabharata is full of grotesque absurdities; men are forever slaying numberless elephants with the ease of an ogre in a fairy story; these marvels give doubtless to those who hear them the same zeal that for thousands of years civilized men have felt in Homer's simpler art with its abhorrence of monstrosities. His work lives, while the oriental epics survive as curiosities, like the mammoths and clumsy animals of early geological periods. Nor is it in their externals alone that the poet's skill is displayed; while the directness of the Greek mind is shown in the simple anthropomorphic treatment of the gods, who appear without supernatural terrors, so the story is told with a close relation to human life. The character of Achilles, his anger and its consequences, are put before us, not only with vividness, but with the truest art. We see the cause of his wrath, the futile efforts made to conciliate him, the miseries that fall on the Greek forces, and finally, when that original anger is expelled by the deeper indignation for the death of Patroklos, his return to the battle-field and final success. It is then one of the most striking things about the Iliad that the interest centers not in the events but in the character of one man. We are not told the story of the fall of Troy, it is not the case that historical incidents form the core of the



poem, as is the case with other epics ; our whole attention is confined to the direct observation of the heart of one man. His bravery in war, with his fervent affection, are what fascinate us. A few extracts will make this clearer than many pages of description. Even through the medium of a translation Homer speaks to all men as no one who writes about him can do.

## V.

In the first book of the *Iliad*, Calchas has told Agamemnon that the plague can only be averted by the restoration of Chryseis to her father, and Agamemnon has answered that his claims must be made good by rich indemnities. Then Achilles breaks out :

“ Ah me, thou clothed in shamelessness, thou of crafty mind, how shall any Achaian hearken to thy bidding with all his heart, be it to go a journey or to fight the foe amain ? Not by reason of the Trojan spearmen came I hither to fight, for they have not wronged me ; never did they harry mine oxen nor my horses, nor ever waste my harvest in deep-soiled Phthia, the nurse of men ; seeing there lieth between us long space of shadowy mountains and echoing sea ; but thee, thou shameless one, followed we hither, to make thee glad by earning recompense at the Trojans’ hands for Menelaus and for thee, thou dog-face ! All this thou reckonest not nor takest thought thereof ; and now thou threatenest thyself to take my meed of honor wherefor I travailed much, and the sons of the Achaians gave it me. Never win I meed like unto thine, when the Achaians sack any populous citadel of Trojan men ; my hands bear the brunt of furious war, but when the apportioning cometh then is thy meed far ampler, and I betake me to the ships with some small thing, yet mine own, when I have fought to weariness. Now will I depart to Phthia, seeing it is far better to return home on my beaked ships ; nor am I minded here in dishonor to draw thee thy fill of riches and wealth.”

Then Agamemnon, king of men, made answer to him : “ Yea, flee, if thy soul be set thereon. It is not I that beseech thee to tarry for my sake ; I have others by my side that shall do me honor, and above all Zeus, lord of counsel. Most hateful art thou to me of all kings, fosterlings of Zeus ; thou ever lovest strife and wars and fightings. Though thou be very strong, yet that I ween is a gift to thee of God. Go home with thy ships and company and lord it among thy Myrmidons ; I reck not aught of thee nor care I for thine indignation ; and this shall be my threat to thee : seeing Phœbus Apollo bereaveth me of Chryseis, her with my ship and my company will I send back ; and mine own self will I go to thy hut and take Briseis of the fair cheeks, even that thy meed of honor, that thou mayest well know how far greater I am than thou, and so shall another hereafter abhor to match his words with mine and rival me to my face.”

So said he, and grief came upon Peleus’ son, and his heart within his shaggy breast was divided in counsel, whether to draw his keen blade from his thigh and set the company aside and so slay Atreides, or to assuage his anger and curb his soul. While yet he doubted thereof in heart and soul, and was drawing his great sword from his sheath, Athene came to him from



HERA FARNESE.

*(Formerly in the Farnese Palace at Rome, now at Naples.)*



heaven, sent forth of the white-armed goddess Hera, whose heart loved both alike and had care for them. She stood behind Peleus' son and caught him by his golden hair, to him only visible, and of the rest no man beheld



COINS WITH THE HEAD OF HERA.

her. Then Achilles marvelled, and turned him about, and straightway knew Pallas Athene; and terribly shone her eyes. He spake to her winged words, and said: "Why now art thou come hither, thou daughter of ægis-bearing Zeus? Is it to behold the insolence of

Agamemnon, son of Atreus? Yea, I will tell thee that I deem shall even be brought to pass: by his own haughtiness shall he soon lose his life." Then the bright-eyed goddess Athene spake to him again: "I came from heaven to stay thine anger, if perchance thou wilt hearken to me, being sent



ATHENE WITH LION-SKIN.

forth of the white-armed goddess Hera, that loveth you twain alike and careth for you. Goto, now, cease from strife, and let not thy hand draw the sword; yet with words indeed revile him, even as it shall come to pass. For thus will I say to thee, and so it shall be fulfilled; hereafter shall goodly gifts come to thee, yea, in threefold measure, by reason of this despite; hold thou thine hand, and hearken to us." And Achilles fleet of foot made answer and said to her: "Goddess, needs must a man observe the saying

of you twain, even though he be very wroth at heart ; for so is the better way. Whosoever obeyeth the gods, to him they gladly hearken." He said, and stayed his heavy hand on the silver hilt, and thrust the great sword back into the sheath, and was not disobedient to the saying of Athene ; and she forthwith was departed to Olympus, to the other gods in the palace of ægis-bearing Zeus.

Then Peleus' son spake again with bitter words to Atreus' son, and in no wise ceased from anger : " Thou heavy with wine, thou with face of dog and heart of deer, never didst thou take courage to arm for battle among thy folk or to lay ambush with the princes of the Achaïans ; that to thee were even as death. Far better booteth it, forsooth, to seize for thyself the meed of honor of every man through the wide host of the Achaïans that speaketh contrary to thee. Folk-devouring king ! seeing thou rulest men of naught ; else were this despite, thou son of Atreus, thy last. But I will speak my word to thee, and swear a mighty oath therewith : verily by this staff that shall no more put forth leaf or twig, seeing it hath forever left its trunk among the hills, neither shall it grow green again, because the ax hath stripped it of leaves and bark ; and now the sons of the Achaïans that exercise judgment bear it in their hands, even they that by Zeus' command watch over the traditions—so shall this be a mighty oath in thine eyes—verily shall longing for Achilles come hereafter upon the sons of the Achaïans one and all ; and then wilt thou in no wise avail to save them, for all thy grief, when multitudes fall dying before manslaying Hector. Then shalt thou tear thy heart within thee for anger that thou didst in no wise honor the best of the Achaïans."

So said Peleides and dashed to earth the staff studded with golden nails, and himself sat down ; and over against him Atreides waxed furious.

The next time that Achilles comes into prominence is in the ninth book, when the Greeks send to him an embassy to entreat his reconciliation and return.



ACHILLES PLAYING THE LYRE.

Hard by the rolling thunder of the sea  
They paced together, lifting many a prayer  
To King Poseidon that their suit might be  
Graced by the son of Peleus. So they fare  
To the chief's hut, and find him soothing there



His mind with the shrill lyre, to songs he knew—  
That lyre with silver yoke, and carven fair,  
Which from Eëtion's spoil he chose and drew —  
Soothing his mind he sang heroic deeds thereto.

Over against him sat Patroclus dumb,  
He only, tarrying till the master cease.  
And lo! the ambassadors both forward come,  
Odysseus first, and stood before his knees.  
And, lyre in hand, the chief, beholding these,  
Sprang to his feet, and with him rose his friend.  
Then swift Achilles gave them words of peace:  
"O, princes, hail! On some great quest ye wend,  
Ye to my heart still dear, whoever else offend."

Thus said Achilles, and with outstretched hand  
Leading them forward made his guests recline  
On benches strewn with purple, and command  
Gave to his friend, Menœtius' son divine:  
"Bring now with speed a larger bowl of wine  
And mix it stronger, and set cups to cheer  
Each: for to-night beneath this roof of mine  
Friends are come in, my nearest and most dear."  
Thus did he speak. Patroclus to his friend gave ear.

Then in the blazing firelight his great board  
He planted, and thereon of hog, goat, sheep,  
All flourishing with fat, the chimes he stored.  
These held Automedon, and wide and deep  
Achilleus sliced, then spitted the full heap;  
And a great fire divine Patroclus lit.  
But when the crackling flame began to sleep,  
He raked the embers, on the stones each spit  
Laid, and the sacred salt then sprinkled, as is fit.

So with much care he roasted all the meat,  
And on the table ranged it, and set bread  
In silver baskets for the chiefs to eat.  
Achilleus dealt out portions, head by head,  
Where he sat fronting, o'er the banquet spread,  
Divine Odysseus from the adverse wall;  
Then bade Patroclus in the fire to shed  
The gods' due part, and he obeyed; and all,  
With eager hand outstretched, upon the viands fall.

When the desire was quenched of food and drink,  
Aias to Phoenix nodded, and divine  
Odysseus in his heart knew what to think,  
And brimmed his goblet, and held forth the wine,  
And spake: "Achilleus, hail, dear friend of mine!  
Neither before in Agamemnon's hut,  
Nor here now, do we lack whereon to dine,  
Corn in abundance, and fat joints to cut;  
Naught that beseems high banquet from our hand is shut.

"But thoughts far other than of feast and song  
Now hold us; for, divine one, in our sight  
Loom clouds of sorrow, and our fear is strong;

Nor know we if our ships at morning light  
 Will stand or fall, except thou come with might.  
 For Troy's brave host, and their allies from far,  
 Near to our fleet and wall lie camped to-night,  
 And in the plain their watchfires burning are,  
 And even now they threaten the black ships to mar.

"Yea, on their right Kronion hath revealed  
 His sign, and Hector in his hope so yearns,  
 Mad with the fire of Zeus, to sweep the field,  
 That even now both men and gods he spurns,  
 And oft aloud, such fury in him burns,  
 Chides the divine Dawn that her feet are lame;  
 For he is set to break the high-built sterns  
 Off from our ships, and wrap the wrecks in flame,  
 And in the smoke hunt down the Achaians near the same.

"Nor is my heart not shaken lest with joy,  
 By the decrees of heaven, his thought he reap,  
 And we be fated to find here in Troy,  
 Far from our native fields, an iron sleep.  
 Up then, at last arise, in harness leap  
 On the rough battle, and our cause befriend!  
 Else wilt thou feel an after anguish deep;  
 For wrong once done no medicine can mend.  
 Think, if in time thou mayst our evil day forefend.

"Ah, my beloved! Thy father Peleus said  
 That day, from Phthia when he let thee part:  
 'My child, Athene and Queen Hera dread  
 Will, if they will, give strength: rule thou thy heart.  
 'Tis better to be gentle. Let no smart  
 Stir thee to evil strife, that young and old  
 May honor thee the more, where'er thou art.'  
 Such were his words, which in thy breast to hold  
 Thou dost forget.— Cease, turn, and bid thy wrath be cold.

"Not worthless are the gifts that shall be given,  
 Which Agamemnon in the camp to thee  
 Hath vowed to render — fireless tripods seven,  
 Ten talents of pure gold, no slender fee,  
 Caldrons a score, twelve steeds bred generously,  
 Who in the swift race many a prize have won.  
 Who earns such wealth as by those horses he,  
 Needs not to lack broad fields beneath the sun,  
 Needs not for dearth of gold be ever left undone.

"Moreover women will he send thee seven,  
 Skilled in the study of all household good,  
 Of Lesbian race, who to his choice were given  
 When that fair island was by thee subdued,  
 And these of women first in beauty stood.  
 All will he give, and with them shall be led  
 Briseïs, whom he reaved with insult rude.  
 And by a great oath will he bind his head,  
 That in the manner of men he hath not known her bed.



" All this shall on the spot be made thine own ;  
 And if hereafter the celestials will  
 That Priam's mighty town be overthrown,  
 Then shalt thou enter, and compile a hill  
 Of brass and gold, thy heavy bark to fill,  
 When we the Achaians shall our prey divide,  
 And twenty Trojan women of good skill  
 In matters of the house elect beside,  
 Who, next to Argive Helen, chief in grace preside.

" And if we sail to Argos, womb of earth,  
 Thou shalt be married to his child, and be  
 Peer to that tender sapling of his hearth,  
 Orestes. In his house dwell daughters three,  
 Virgins, Chrysothemis, Laodice,  
 And Iphianassa. Whom thou list soe'er,  
 Home shalt thou lead her without tax or fee;  
 And he will add such gifts, exceeding rare,  
 As no man for his child did ever yet prepare.

" And well-built cities will he yield thee seven,  
 Green Ira, Enopë, and Cardamyl,  
 Aipeia fair, and Pheræ blest of heaven,  
 Deep-lawned Antheia, wet with many a rill,  
 Pedasus crowned with vineyards on the hill —  
 All on the coast-line beyond Pylos bay,  
 Men rich in flocks and herds that region fill,  
 Who at thy feet, as at a god's, will lay  
 Gifts, and beneath thy rule their fat revenues pay.

" All these, to quench thy fire, will he bestow.  
 But if within thy soul thou dost abhor  
 Both Agamemnon and his gifts, yet so  
 Have pity on the Achaians, wounded sore  
 And broken in the camp, who will adore  
 Thee like a god — their fame is in thy hand.  
 Hector is now not far, but at thy door  
 Raves loudly that no Danaan in the land,  
 None that our ships brought hither, can before him stand."

Answered the fleet Achilleus in his turn :  
 " Versed in all craft, Laertes' son divine,  
 No, three times no ! — the word is light to learn,  
 Just as I mean it, to the very line  
 Of fixed resolve that will not brook decline.  
 Clear let it ring, that no man deem it well  
 To murmur on, for any lies of mine :  
 Him count I hateful as the doors of hell  
 Who in his heart thinks other than his tongue doth tell.

" Nay, hear me out ! I move not hand or knee,  
 Neither for Agamemnon, Atreus' son,  
 Nor all the Danaan kings. What boots it me  
 Eternally for ever to go on  
 Fighting with hostile men, where thanks are none ?  
 For though a man bide fast in his own place,  
 Or drink war to the dregs, our doom is one.  
 The sluggard and the strong find equal grace ;  
 All in the dust lie down, the valiant and the base.

“ Or weigh my griefs — am I so far preferred  
 That I should alway set my life at stake ?  
 See with each morsel how the mother-bird  
 Flies to her callow nestlings in the brake,  
 And with herself it fares ill for their sake ;  
 So ever in the field have I gone through  
 The toil of bloody days, and lain awake  
 The long nights, brooding what was left to do,  
 Still with the enemy warring for the wives of you.



ACHILLES LOOKING AFTER THE DEPARTING BRISEIS.  
 (From a Pompeian Wall Painting.)

“ Twelve cities with my fleet, and twelve save one  
 On dry land sieging have I sacked in Troy,  
 Each with a hoard of spoil, and Atreus' son  
 Sat by the ships, and here and there a toy  
 Dealt from my gains, but did the rest enjoy.  
 All other of the kings their guerdon reap  
 Whole in the camp, but mine he doth destroy,  
 Mine only of the Achaians, and doth keep  
 Her that I love — now let him in soft dalliance sleep !



" Why do the men of Argos fight and fall?  
 Or to what end is this far-famed array?  
 Hath not the bright-haired Helen caused it all?  
 Yes, no man ever loved his wife but they,  
 None but the sons of Atreus! Rather say  
 All that are good and wise love well their own,  
 As I loved her, albeit my sword's prey.  
 Now am I robbed and cheated, I alone —  
 Go, let him spare his pains: no offering shall atone.

" Nay, with thyself, Odysseus, and the kings,  
 This ravage of red fire I warn him quench.  
 Without my help hath he done many things,  
 Buildd a wall, and dug with stakes a trench;  
 Yet bloody is the sword in Hector's clench  
 Still. When I fought, no challenge to the plain  
 Could from the hold of Troy this Hector wrench  
 Save to the Western gates that front the main:  
 There he abode my wrath, and scarce got home again.

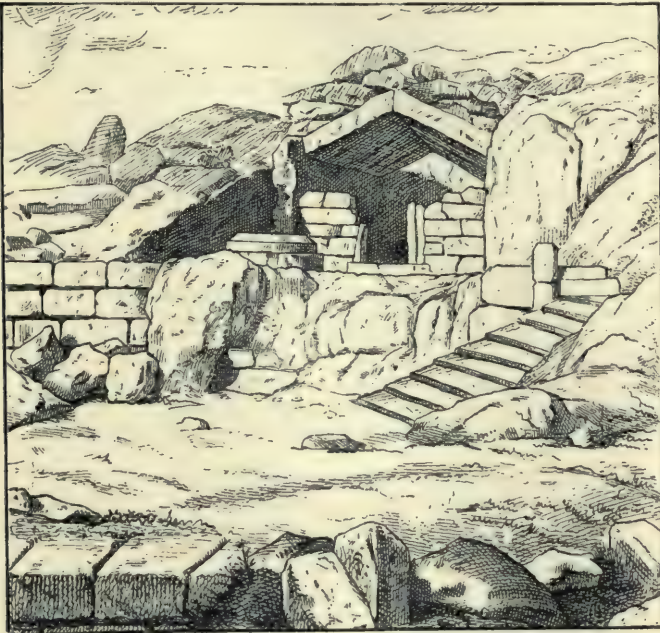
" Now with brave Hector will I fight no more.  
 This but remaineth, that I vows fulfill  
 To Zeus and all the gods, then leave the shore  
 With barks well laden; and, if so thou will,  
 And if the care to see it is with thee still,  
 Thou on broad Hellespont mayst view my fleet  
 Ride early in the morning, rowed with skill;  
 And if Poseidon give us help, my feet  
 On the third day will stand in Phthia's green retreat.

" There I go back to many things I love;  
 Nor empty are my ships of brass and gold,  
 And fair-zoned women over and above,  
 And glittering steel, my wages that I hold.  
 But he that gave it, now with outrage bold,  
 Great Agamemnon, doth my guerdon spoil.  
 Therefore I bid you all my words unfold,  
 That, if again some Danaan he would foil,  
 Then may that dire offense the Achaian host embroil.

" His brows are shameless, and his soul to boot,  
 Yet me the craven durst not front again,  
 Though cloaked in impudence from face to foot.  
 No counsel will I weave, no task ordain,  
 With him who trapt me in so foul a train,  
 Nor can his glozing tongue me twice ensnare.  
 Away with him for ever! Zeus hath ta'en  
 His wits. I hate, and can in no wise bear,  
 Sight of his gifts, nor him do I count worth a hair.

" Not though he gave me twice ten fold, or more,  
 His wealth, and made Orchomenus my bait,  
 Or Thebes of Egypt, full of countless store,  
 Thebes the wide hundred-gated, and each gate  
 Lets out two hundred charioteers in state,  
 Though treasures he might deal like dust or sand,  
 Not even then could he my wrath abate,  
 Till from my soul he purge the searing brand,  
 And uttermost revenge uprender to my hand.

“ And as for marriage, I will not come near  
 A child of Agamemnon, Atreus' son.  
 Though she be golden Aphrodite's peer  
 In beauty, and Athene's art outrun,  
 Not thus, nor ever, shall that rite be done.  
 Nay, let him rather, as he list, provide  
 Some Argive kingly enough to be his son ;  
 For, if the gods me safely homeward guide,  
 Peleus himself will find some maiden for my bride.



APOLLO'S SHRINE.  
 (After Lebègue, *Recherches sur Délos.*)

“ In Hellas there are maids of kingly line,  
 And fit wives may be chosen from the same.  
 Yea, there not seldom doth my soul incline  
 To get me a good wife, some noble dame,  
 And my sire's wealth enjoy. Life's worth may claim  
 More than men say Troy held in days of old,  
 That time of peace before the Achaïans came,  
 More than that stony barrier can enfold  
 In the Apollonian shrine, on Pytho's rocky hold.

“ For oxen and fat sheep abide their price,  
 And lost may be redeemed in spoil again,  
 And tripods may be had not once nor twice,  
 And high-bred horses with their golden mane.  
 But man's life, when it flies, no power can chain,  
 And in the spoils of war 'tis nowhere found,  
 Nor hunters in the field that prize obtain,  
 When naked to the night that hems it round,  
 Once from the teeth it slips, and is beyond the bound.



" My mother, silver-footed Thetis, saith,  
 Fate can I choose of twain — if here I fight,  
 Dies my return, my glory knows not death;  
 But homeward if I sail, my glory quite  
 Dies, but a long time shall I see the light,  
 And from cold death live many days apart.  
 And verily 'twere wise to share my flight,  
 All ye the rest. Troy's town defies your art;  
 Zeus makes his arm their shield, and gives the people heart.

" Now to the princes of the camp go ye,  
 And tell my words : it is their right to hear :  
 That with a better judgment they may see  
 How from this doom both men and fleet to clear.  
 This project of their mind will not cohere,  
 Nor bend me, to the which they set their hand.  
 But Phœnix shall remain till dawn appear,  
 And in my ships go back to the dear land  
 To-morrow, if he will — by his own choice I stand."

He spake, and all in silence bowed the head,  
 The stern rebuke so fiercely he rolled out;  
 Till with strong tears the old knight Phœnix said,  
 While for the ships he trembled sore in doubt :  
 " Achilleus, if indeed thou art about  
 Homeward to pass, and, in thy wrath so hot,  
 To let Troy burn our ships, and put to rout  
 The Achaian host, and work I know not what,  
 How then can I, dear child, remain where thou art not ?

" That day, from Phthia when he let thee go,  
 Not yet familiar with the ways of fight,  
 Nor in the council seen where great men show,  
 Me Peleus sent, to learn thee all things right,  
 To put words in thy mouth, and deeds incite;  
 Nor will I leave thee till my time is told,  
 Not though a god should undertake to-night  
 To peel the years off, and my youth re-mold.  
 As when I left sweet Hellas in the days of old.

" So for love's sake I made thee what thou art,  
 Godlike Achilleus ; for with none but me  
 At table ever wouldst thou play thy part,  
 Till with choice bits I fed thee on my knee,  
 And held wine to thy lips : my breast would be  
 Oft dabbled with the wine thy weakness spilt.  
 Thus have I toiled and suffered much for thee,  
 Since never from *my* loins could race be built;  
 Thee for my child I took, my bulwark, if thou wilt.

" Tame then thy wrath : the very gods will turn,  
 And, though a man sin far, their hearts incline  
 To heed our vows, and the fat gifts we burn.  
 For Prayers are daughters of great Zeus divine,  
 Lame, wrinkled, haggard, and of sidelong eyen.  
 These are in Atè's track still moving slow,  
 But Atè hath strong hands to make men pine,  
 She with firm tread the earth walks dealing woe,  
 And they behind her toil, and cure it as they go.

" He who the daughters of great Zeus on high  
Shall reverence in his heart when they come near,  
Him they much help, and still regard his cry.  
But whoso drives them off and will not hear,  
Then they seek Zeus, and at his knees appear,  
That Atè mark him, and avenge the wrong.  
But thou, Achilleus, to their suit give ear,  
This honor that they ask deny not long,  
They who the stern hearts bend of others that are strong.

" Save for set gifts, and other named beside  
By Atreus' son, not lightly to give o'er  
Thy wrath would it seem wise, and help provide  
To save the army, though their need were sore.  
Now doth he bring large gifts, and promise more,  
And of the chiefs whom thou dost love the best  
Hath sent with prayers the noblest to thy door.  
Spurn not their feet, nor yet deny their quest,  
Albeit, before, in anger thou didst well to rest.

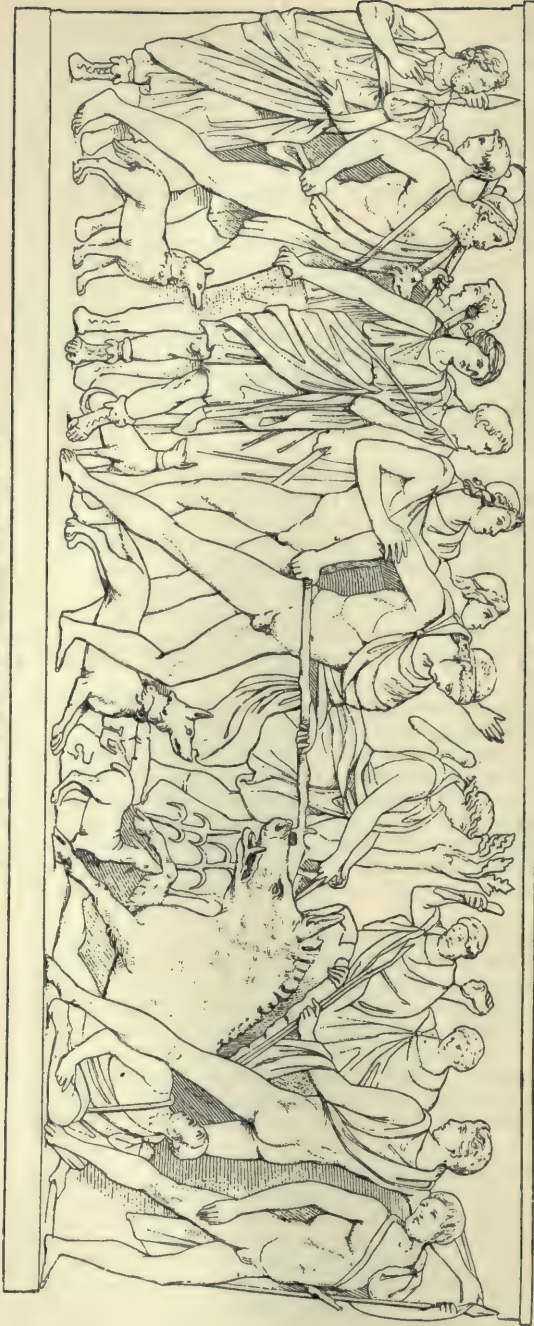
" Such were the men of old of whom we hear ;  
Their anger might be tamed with gifts, and taught.  
This I remember in an age not near ;  
And to you all, my friends, the tale is brought.  
Once the Curètes and Ætolians fought  
Round Calydon with deeds of high renown,  
And many were the deaths. Ætolia sought  
To shield the lovely Calydonian town,  
And the Curètes strove with fire to raze it down.

" For bright-throned Artemis plagued sore the land,  
She lacking, when the gods received their hire,  
Her own first-fruits ; for Ceneus held his hand,  
Rash or not knowing ; but the sin was dire.  
So the divine Maid-archer stung with ire,  
Sent a wild white-fanged boar ; and the fell brute  
Found him a lair, and trod the fields to mire,  
Laid vineyards waste, and tore up by the root  
The tall trees of the land, with branch and flower and fruit.

" Him Meleager, son of Ceneus, slew,  
With hounds and huntsmen gathered to his aid  
From many cities ; for he scorned a few,  
This huge beast, mad with power, of naught afraid,  
And much men on the funeral-pyre he laid.  
But she, yet pouring the full plagues of sin,  
Between Curétis and Ætolia made  
A great shout, and the unutterable din  
Of arms, for the boar's head, and for his bristly skin.

" While Meleager, dear to Ares, fought,  
Still the Curètes badly fared in strife,  
And to their walls fell back, achieving naught.  
But when wrath darkened Meleager's life,  
Wrath, which in hearts of even the wise is rife,  
He angry with Althæa, who him bare,  
Lay housed with Cleopatra, his dear wife,  
Child of Evenus' child, Marpessa fair,  
And Idas, flower of knights that on the earth then were.





MELEAGER HUNTING THE CALEDONIAN BOAR.  
(*Sarcophagus Relief.*)

"He for his lovely bride with shaft and bow  
 Braved Phœbus ; and their child for ever kept  
 The name Halcyonè, a name of woe,  
 Thereafter in the house ; so wildly wept,  
 When lord Apollo her from Idas swept,  
 That mother in the bitter halcyon strain —  
 Housed with his wife an angry sloth he slept,  
 Eating his mother's curse with fell disdain,  
 Who by the gods had cursed him for her brethren slain.

"She madly with both hands, and madlier yet,  
 Kind Earth would beat, and falling with prone knee  
 And eyes down, till with tears her breast was wet,  
 Hades implore, and dire Persephone  
 Against her child, that death for death might be.  
 Soon the night-wandering Fury heard her cry,  
 And with a heart like flint from hell came she.  
 Rolled on the air a dreadful clang went by,  
 War's thunder at the gates, and battered towers on high.

"Anon the elders of Ætolia send  
 The noblest of their priesthood with much prayer,  
 To win forth Meleager to defend  
 Their walls, and promise a great gift. For where  
 Soil on the plain lay richest and most fair  
 In lovely Calydon, good land enow  
 They proffered, an estate to be cut there,  
 The one half vineyard, where he list and how,  
 And the one half clear tilth that crumbles to the plough.

"Also the old knight Cœneus prayed him sore,  
 And oft returned and gave his ears no rest,  
 Shaking the strong leaves of the chamber-door.  
 Yea, though his mother and his sisters prest,  
 He would not. And the friends whom he loved best  
 Came and besought him, men of high renown,  
 Nor was the heart yet tamed within his breast,  
 Till the man's chamber was half beaten down,  
 And the foe scaled the walls, and wasted the great town.

"Then, last of all, about his neck to weep  
 His dear wife hung, and in extreme dismay  
 Cast on his mind the bitter things they reap  
 Whose city to their foes is given a prey ;  
 How in the victory grown men they slay,  
 And sack the town with fire, and children hale,  
 And some the deep-zoned women rend away.  
 And his heart smote him as he heard the tale,  
 And he sprang forth to go, and seized his shining mail.

"Thus Meleager did Ætolia save,  
 Impelled by his own heart ; but in the end  
 Received not at their hand the gift so brave,  
 Yet did the work. But thou relent, dear friend,  
 Rise, and the gifts go with thee ! To defend  
 Our ships when flaming were less worth by far.  
 Come, for thine honor shall man's fame transcend.  
 But when, without gifts, thy feet mount the car,  
 Less shalt thou gain in honor, and yet help the war."



And answering, spake the swift Achilles there :  
 " O Phoenix, dear old man, I naught regard  
 This honor (and yet Zeus hath given my share),  
 Which holds me by the fleet, a life so hard,  
 Till the breath fail me, and my knees be marred.  
 Yet one word more, and it my last shall be :  
 Vex not my soul with weepings, but discard  
 Thy favor to the king. 'Tis not for thee,  
 Whom I love, to love him, and turn away from me.

" Stand ever at my side in love, in hate,  
 And half mine honor, half my realm, is thine.  
 And join not in their tidings, but here wait  
 And sleep on a soft couch, till morning shine ;  
 Then better can we shape our own design."  
 So, to send out the others, with his head  
 He to Patroclus bowed a silent sign  
 In the hut quickly to strew Phoenix' bed.  
 And Telamonian Aias then arose and said :

" Son of Laertes, in the way we go  
 End can I none find out : let us depart.  
 Bad is our news, but we must let them know.  
 Come, for Achilles bears an iron heart,  
 Nor can the love we lent him heal his smart.  
 Yet payment still for child or brother slain  
 Men take, and for a price keep down their heart,  
 And bid the slayer in the land remain —  
 But, for this girl, the gods let never thy wrath wane.

" Now seven for one we yield, the best we find,  
 And gifts abundant — thine own roof revere.  
 Thy suppliants are we come, to bend thy mind,  
 Of all Achaia thy most near and dear !"  
 But he : " Brave Aias, prince divine, give ear !  
 Right nobly dost thou speak : I love thee well.  
 But when I ponder how in public here  
 He used me like a villain, my reins swell  
 With anger, and I hate him with the hate of hell.

" Go now your ways, and render back my word :  
 Ne'er of the bloody field will I think more,  
 Till by the Myrmidons' own camp is heard  
 The roll of Hector's march, and from my door  
 I see the son of Priam driving sore  
 Your host, and burning with red fire the fleet.  
 But when the battle round my hut shall roar,  
 And all about me there come smoke and heat,  
 Hector, I think, though raging, will at last retreat."

In the eighteenth book Thetis appears, after Patroclus has been slain, and asks :

" Why weeps Achilles ? What is now thy care ?  
 Speak out, nor hide the cause : all things are done  
 By Zeus, for which thou liftedst hands in prayer,  
 That to their ships the Achaian host should run,  
 And bear much woe, for want of thee, my son."

And, groaning deep, the chief in answer said :  
 "Mother, 'tis true, all this the god hath done :  
 But what avails it, now my friend is dead,  
 Patroclus, whom I loved e'en as my own dear head ?

"Him have I lost : his arms doth Hector wear,  
 Mine own proud harness, wonderful to see,  
 Which the gods gave to Peleus, guerdon fair,  
 That day, when with a man they bedded thee.  
 Ah ! hadst thou with thy mates in the deep sea  
 Lived on, and Peleus ta'en a mortal wife !  
 'Twas that great sorrow in thy heart might be  
 For thy lost son : for never more in life  
 Shalt thou receive me home, returning from the strife.

"For life to me henceforth is sorry cheer,  
 Nor care I with my kind to look on day,  
 Save Hector first, down stricken by my spear,  
 Lie prone in dust, and breathe his life away,  
 And for the spoil of dead Patroclus pay."  
 And Thetis spoke, weeping with tearful moan :  
 "Short will thy life be, child, for this thy say ;  
 For after Hector's death straight comes thine own."  
 Whom answered fierce Achilles in disdainful tone :

"Straight let me die, since to my dying friend  
 I lent no aid ; far from his own abode  
 He fell, nor did mine arm the curse forefend.  
 Now to mine home I never shall take road,  
 Nor help from me hath to Patroclus flowed  
 Nor to those mates who died 'neath Hector's hand,  
 Here sit I by the vessels, a dead load,  
 Myself the best of all the Achaian band  
 In war : — for better some in council-hall upstand .

"Perish foul strife from gods and mortals too,  
 And anger, which doth e'en the wise provoke ;  
 Which sweeter far than trickling honey-dew  
 In a man's breast comes rising up like smoke.  
 'Twas thus my wrath 'gainst Agamemnon woke.  
 But now, though grieved, put we that matter by,  
 Bowing our dear hearts to compulsion's yoke,  
 I go to find out Hector : let me die  
 When Zeus my end ordains, and the other gods on high !

"Great Heracles, he could not 'scape the tomb,  
 But fate and Hera's rancor made him tame :  
 So I, if fate award me a like doom,  
 Will lie down dead : but now I yearn for fame,  
 And long to make some deep-zoned Dardan dame,  
 Wiping with both her hands the tears that rill  
 Down her fair cheeks, weep loud for grief and shame ;  
 And let them know that I have long sat still.  
 So keep me not from fight, though fond : for forth I will."

And silver-footed Thetis spoke again :  
 "True are thy words, my darling : 'tis no wrong  
 From thy much-suffering mates to ward off bane :



But thy fair arms are kept Troy's host among,  
 Brazen, bright-gleaming : Hector, champion strong,  
 Flaunts them on his own shoulders : well I wot  
 Death dogs him close, nor shall his pride be long.  
 But thou the press of battle enter not,  
 Till thou behold me here, returning to this spot :

" For I return with earliest dawn of day,  
 From lord Hephæstus other arms to bring."  
 So saying, she wended from her son away,  
 And, turning, spoke to her sea-following :  
 " Now plunge you down where the deep waters spring,  
 Hie to the palace of our reverend sire,  
 And bear the tidings to the gray old king :  
 I seek Olympus and the lord of fire,  
 If he will make my son fresh arms at my desire."

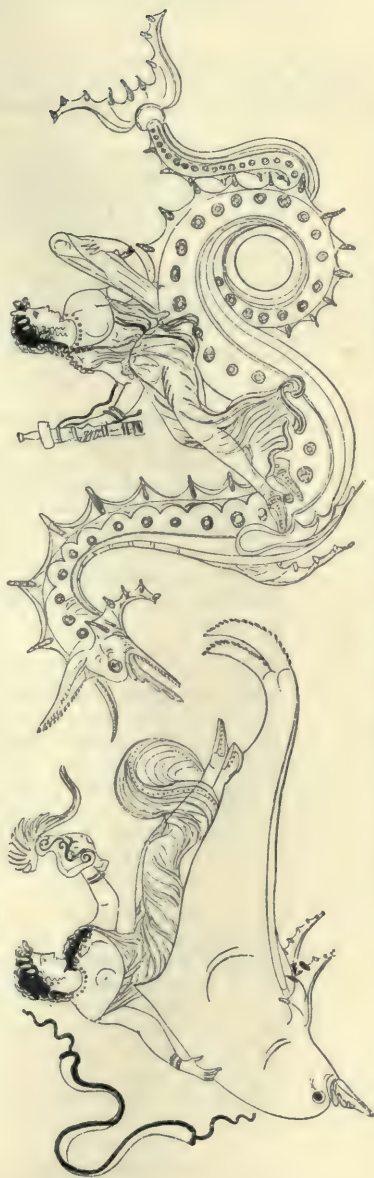
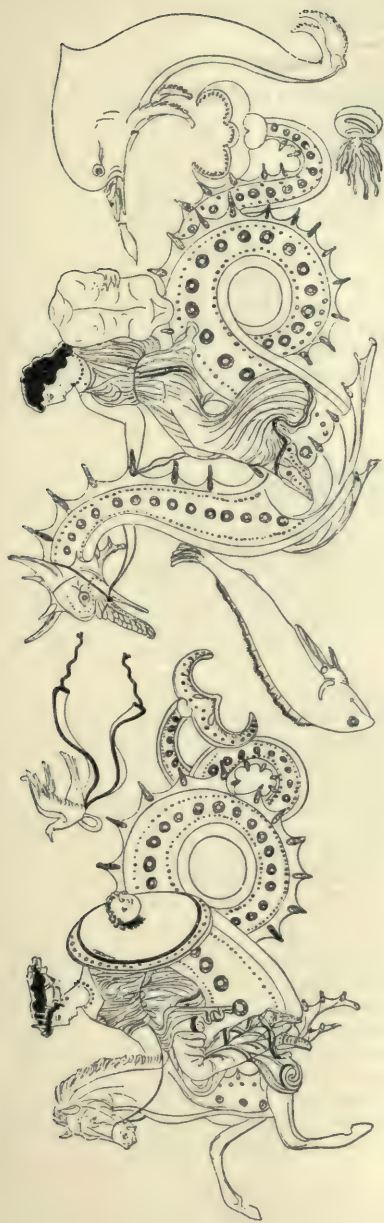
Another impressive scene is at the end of the nineteenth book,  
 when the horses of Achilles announce his early death :

Meantime the squires his chariot, nothing slack,  
 Yoked, fastening strap and collar, as was meet :  
 The fiery steeds they bitted, and drew back  
 The flowing reins to the well-soldered seat :  
 Automedon climbed the car with nimble feet,  
 Grasping the glittering whip of golden wire :  
 Behind in glorious panoply complete  
 Mounted Achilleus, like the sun's red fire,  
 And fiercely he cheered on the horses of his sire :

" Xanthus and Balius ! far-renowned pair  
 Born of Podarge ! let your busy brain  
 Some other counsel ponder, how to bear  
 Your master home, when war has had her drain,  
 Nor leave him as ye left Patroclus slain."  
 Whom from the harness that fleet horse bespoke,  
 Xanthus, and drooped his head, while all his mane  
 Trailed on the ground, escaping 'neath the yoke :  
 And Hera in his breast a human voice awoke :

" Ay, great Achilleus, we will save thee now ;  
 Yet it is thy death-day near, nor ours the blame :  
 No—'tis high Heaven, and Fate that will not bow.  
 For not that sluggish were our feet or lame  
 Did the proud foe Patroclus' body shame.  
 But Leto's son, that glorious potency,  
 Slew him in fight, and won for Hector fame.  
 For us, like swiftest Zephyr we can fly :  
 But thine own fate is fixed, by God and man to die."

Then ceased he, for the dumb Erinnyes stayed  
 The fountain of his voice : and with sharp gall  
 Swift-foot Achilleus wrathful answer made :  
 " Xanthus, why bode me death ? thou hast no call.  
 Right well I know that 'tis my fate to fall  
 Here in this land, from sire and mother far ;



NEREIDS CARRYING WEAPONS FROM HEPHÆSTUS TO ACHILLES.  
*(Drawing on Amphora.)*



Yet will I not forbear for great or small  
Till to Troy's host I give their fill of war."  
He said, and in the van, loud shouting, urged his car.

Another memorable passage is to be found in the twenty-third book, where Patroclus visits Achilles in a dream :

But when the lust of meat and drink was stayed,  
Each sought his several hut, and wooed repose.  
Only Pelides, on the margin laid  
Of the loud deep, groaned with heartrending throes,  
Pillowed in a smooth place, where gently upflows  
The landward wave, his comrades round about :  
There sleep came down, and loosed him from his woes,  
Soft mantling : for his limbs were wearied out,  
Giving swift Hector chase by Ilion's high redoubt.

When lo ! the ghost of poor Patroclus came,  
Voice, eyes, height, raiment, all, most like to see,  
Stood o'er his head, and called him by his name :  
"Sleep'st thou, Achilleus, nor rememberest me ?  
Living, thou lov'dst me ; dead, I fade from thee :  
Entomb me quick, that I may pass death's door :  
For the ghosts drive me from their company,  
Nor let me join them on the further shore :  
So in the waste wide courts I wander evermore.

"Reach me thy hand, I pray ; for ne'er again,  
The pile once lit, shalt thou behold thy mate :  
Never in life apart from our brave train  
Shall we take counsel : but the selfsame fate  
Enthralls me now that by my cradle sate.  
Thou too art doomed, Achilleus the divine,  
To fall and die by sacred Troia's gate.  
Yet one thing more, wilt thou thine ear incline ;  
Let not my bones in death lie separate from thine.

"We twain together in your house were bred,  
Since, me, poor child, Menœtius did convey  
Thither from Opus, for blood rashly shed,  
What time Amphidamas' son upon a day  
I slew unwitting, quarreling at our play.  
Welcome I had from Peleus, horseman brave,  
Who reared me up to be thy squire in fray.  
So let our bones be mingled in the grave,  
Hid in the golden urn thy goddess mother gave."

Whom answering swift Achilleus thus addressed :  
"Why com'st thou, loved one, thus thy will to show ?  
All things shall be fulfilled at thy behest.  
But stand thou near, that each his arms may throw  
Round either's neck, and have his fill of woe."  
So saying, he clutched at him with hands outspread,

But caught not : shrieking went the soul below  
 Like smoke : up leapt Achilles, chill with dread,  
 Smote his flat palms together, and words of pity said :

“ O heaven ! there doth abide among the dead  
 Semblance and life, though thought is theirs no more :  
 For all night long hath stood above my head  
 The soul of poor Patroclus, wailing sore,  
 And told its will : his very form it wore.”  
 So saying, in each he wakened sorrow's spring:  
 Red morning broke as they their grief did pour  
 Round the pale corpse. But Agamemnon king  
 Sent men and mules abroad, good store of wood to bring.

There are certain other passages that show with what vividness Homer saw and described the scenes of his immortal poem, and none is more worthy of note than the one that portrays Helen watching the Greek army from the Trojan wall :

There Priam, Panthoüs, Lampus, and their train,  
 Thymoetes, Clytius, Hyketaon sat,  
 Ucalegon, Antenor, wise of brain,  
 Hard by the gates, and council held thereat ;  
 Loosed by old age from war, but in debate  
 Most admirable, and with the voice endued  
 Of clear cicalas that in summer heat  
 Thrill with a silver tune the shady wood.  
 Such sat the Trojan elders, each in thoughtful mood.

These seeing Helen at the tower arrive,  
 One to another wingèd words addressed :  
 “ Well may the Trojans and Achaians strive,  
 And a long time bear sorrow and unrest,  
 For such a woman, in her cause and quest,  
 Who like immortal goddesses in face  
 Appeareth ; yet 'twere even thus far best  
 In ships to send her back to her own place,  
 Lest a long curse she leave to us and all our race.”

Then Priam called her : “ Sit near me, dear child,  
 And thy once husband, kindred, friends survey.  
 Thee hold I guiltless, but the gods, less mild,  
 Scourge me with war when I am old and gray.  
 Now tell me this large warrior's name, I pray,  
 This so majestic in his port and mien ;  
 Others yet taller I behold to-day,  
 But none till now so beautiful I ween ;  
 So estimable and grave, so king-like, have I seen.”

Helen, divine of women, answering saith :  
 “ Father, thy gray hairs speak with awful power.  
 O that for dear life I had chosen death,  
 When with thy son I left my bridal bower,  
 My child, and sweet companions ! but the hour



Passed, and I wail forever! Thou dost see  
 Lord Agamemnon, Atreus' son, the flower  
 Of kings, and a strong warrior. This is he  
 That was my husband's brother, unless I dream, ah me!"

Him then the old man much admired, and said :  
 "Blest son of Atreus, born with happy star,  
 O, of how many Achaïans art thou head!  
 Once that vine-country where the Phrygians are,  
 Numberless men, with steeds and glancing car,  
 By Otreus and high Mygdon ruled, I knew.  
 Hard by Sangarius stream encamped for war,  
 When came the Amazons, my help they drew :  
 But than these dark-eyed warriors they were far more few."

Seeing Odysseus then the old man said :  
 "Him too describe, dear child, at my behest,  
 Less tall than Agamemnon by the head,  
 But in the shoulders wider, and the breast.  
 His arms upon the boon earth glittering rest,  
 As mid the ranks he moveth to and fro.  
 Him to a thick-fleeced ram I liken best,  
 Passing amid a great flock white as snow."  
 And Helen, child of Zeus, this answer did bestow :

"Odysseus is the man, Laertes' son,  
 Wise, and Ithaca's rough country bred,  
 All arts to whom and deep designs are known."  
 Thereto the wise Antenor answering said :  
 "Lady, a true word from thy lips hath fled.  
 Here also hath divine Odysseus been.  
 He came with Menelaus, warrior dread,  
 To hear of thee ; they were my guests, I ween,  
 Who the whole cast of both, and inmost mind, have seen."

"When in the Trojan council they appeared,  
 Each standing, Menelaus overpassed  
 His friend in stature upward from the beard.  
 Of the more honourable and graver cast  
 Odysseus seemed, both sitting. When at last  
 For speech the arrows of keen thought they strung,  
 Then Menelaus spoke with utterance fast,  
 In brief sort, chary of words, but clear of tongue,  
 Not wandering from the point, albeit in age more young."

"But from his seat when wise Odysseus sprang,  
 Firming his eyes upon the ground he stood,  
 Nor waved his scepter through the whole harangue,  
 But clenched it, like a man sullen and rude,  
 As 'twere a boor or one in angry mood.  
 But when the volume of his voice he rolled  
 In words like snow-flakes, winter's feathery brood,  
 None could Odysseus rival, young or old ;  
 All cared to hear him now far more than to behold."

Aias beholding third, the old man said :  
 " Who is this other, far most tall and wide ? "  
 Helen, divine of women, answering said :  
 " Aias, the tower of war ; and on that side  
 Stands, girt with captains, godlike in his pride  
 Idomeneus of Crete. He oft of old  
 Did in my husband's home, our guest, abide.  
 But now all other Achaians I behold,  
 All of them know right well, and can their names unfold.

" Only two captains can I nowhere see,  
 Knight Castor, Pollux of the iron glove,  
 Own brethren, of one mother born with me.  
 Came they not hither from the land we love ?  
 Or, if they sailed the briny deeps above,  
 Dare they not enter on the field with men,  
 For taunts and insult, which my name doth move ? "  
 She spake—but them kind earth, far from her ken,  
 In Lacedæmon held, their dear land, even then.

Meantime the heralds bear the holy things,  
 Two lambs, and wine that maketh noble cheer,  
 Stored in a goatskin ; and Idæus brings  
 The glittering bowl, and golden cups. He, near  
 The old man standing, bade him mark and hear :  
 " Son of Laomedon, with speed arise !  
 For now Troy's best desire thee to appear,  
 And Argives brazen-mailed, before their eyes,  
 To strike truce in the plain with prayer and sacrifice.

In the sixth book is the famous parting scene between Hector and Andromache :

When Hector heard that, to the Western gates,  
 Meaning that way to pass forth to the plain,  
 He sped back quickly through the long wide streets.  
 And lo ! his dear wife ran to meet him fain,  
 Child of Eëtion, who held high reign  
 Over Cilician men, in Thebes afar,  
 'Neath woody Placos — she, and in her train  
 A young nurse and a babe, as babies are,  
 Hector's one child, their darling, like a lovely star.

Him Hector called Scamandrius, but the rest  
 Astyanax — thus honoring Hector's child ;  
 For Hector was alone Troy's stay confest,  
 And they " The City's King " his babe had styled.  
 He then, beholding the sweet infant, smiled  
 In silence : but Andromache there shed  
 Thick tears beside him, and in anguish wild  
 Clasped Hector by the hand, and spake, and said,  
 " Dear one, thine own brave temper will yet lay thee dead.

" Thou hast no pity for thy child or me,  
 Ere long thy widow, when the Achaian men  
 Shall like a flood pour round, and murder thee.  
 I tell thee it were better for me then



Dark earth to enter, if that day come when,  
 Light of my eyes, I lose thee. For no cheer,  
 No comfort ever can I find again,  
 But wailings in the night, and anguish drear,  
 When for thine arms I feel, and thou art nowhere near.

"No parents have I now. Achilles slew  
 My father, when he came to raze and blot  
 Cilician Thebè, and with doom o'erthrew  
 My father's people, and much plunder got.  
 Eëtion he slew there, but stript him not :  
 Awe was upon him, and his heart was bound.  
 But with his gilded arms in that same spot  
 He burned him, piling o'er his bones a mound ;  
 And the hill-nymphs, Zeus' children, planted elms around.

"And brethren I had seven, within our hall ;  
 In one day did their light go down and cease ;  
 Swift-foot divine Achilles slew them all,  
 Mid their slow kine and sheep of silver fleece.  
 As for my mother, who in days of peace  
 'Neath woody Placos shared my father's sway,  
 Her, with the spoil brought thence, did he release  
 For countless ransom : but before her day  
 By Artemis' keen arrows she was taken away.

"O, Hector, thou to me art mother dear,  
 And father, brother, husband of my life.  
 Have pity ! on the tower abide thou here :  
 Leave not an orphan child, a widowed wife.  
 Near the wild figs, where footing is most rife,  
 Stand : for by that way came their bravest on  
 Thrice, with the two Aiantes, wild in strife,  
 Idomeneus, the Atridæ, Tydeus' son,  
 Whether by seer advised, or by their own heart won."

And the large white-plumed Hector answered then :  
 "All this I knew ; 'twas mine own heart's appeal ;  
 But scorn unutterable from Trojan men  
 And long-robed Trojan women I fear to feel,  
 If like a dastard from the fight I steal.  
 No, for my soul I cannot. I have learned  
 Still to be foremost for my country's weal,  
 Nor even from the van my feet I turned ;  
 Thus for my sire large fame, and for myself have earned.

"For the day comes, I know it, and the hour  
 Comes, it will come, when sacred Troy shall fall,  
 And Priam, and his people, and his power.  
 Yet not that sorrow of the Trojans all  
 Hereafter, when in vain my help they call,  
 Nor even of Hecuba, nor Priam king,  
 Nor of my brothers, whom, so many and tall,  
 Their foes ill-minded to the dust shall bring,  
 Slain with the sword, my breast so bitterly can wring —

"Not these, nor all griefs on my heart so weigh,  
 As thine, when some one of the Achaian band  
 Robs thee for ever of thy freedom's day,  
 And bears thee weeping to an alien land.  
 Lo, then in Argos shalt thou set thine hand  
 To weave thy stern task at another's loom,  
 Or at Messeis and Hyperia stand  
 With pail or pitcher, and thy heart consume,  
 Struggling reluctant much, yet conquered by strong doom.

"Then some one may behold thy tears, and say,  
 'See now the wife of Hector whom we knew  
 First of war-captains in his country's day,  
 Ere we the towers of Ilion overthrew.'  
 So will he speak, and thou shalt wail anew  
 For anguish, and sore need of one like me,  
 Thy life to shield, thy slavery to undo.  
 But let the mounded earth my covering be,  
 Ere of thy cries I hear, and fierce hands laid on thee!"

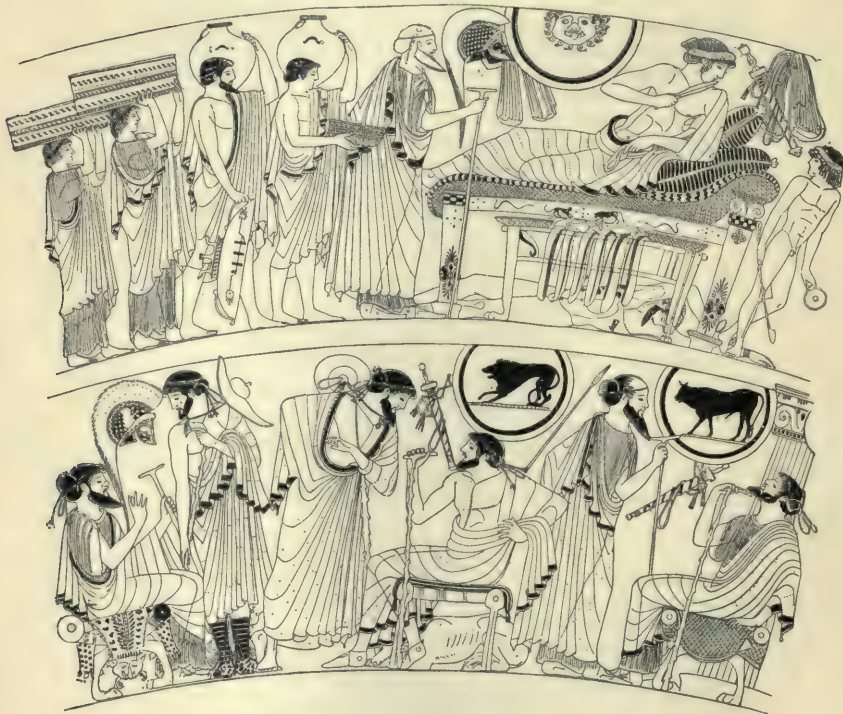
Then with his arms spread forth did Hector lean  
 Toward his fair babe, who to the nurse's breast  
 Clung with a cry, scared at his father's mien,  
 And at the brazen helm, so grimly drest,  
 Waving aloft the long white horsehair crest.  
 Both parents laughed; and Hector from his brow  
 Laid the helm shining on the earth, then pressed  
 Fondly, now dandled in his arms, and now  
 Kissed his dear child, and spake to all the gods his vow:

"Zeus, and all gods, let this my child attain  
 Praise in the host of Troia, even as I,  
 In strength so good, and full of power to reign;  
 And when he comes from battle, let men cry  
 '*He far excels his father,*' and on high  
 Spoils let him bear with foeman's gore defiled,  
 And his dear mother's heart make glad thereby."  
 He spake, and in his wife's arms laid the child,  
 Who to her pure breast clasped him, as in tears she smiled.

Her lovingly he touched, and pitying said:  
 "Dearest, be not too heavy and undone;  
 For no man against fate can send me dead  
 To Hades, and his hour can no man shun,  
 None bad or good, since earth was peopled — none.  
 But now go home, and to thine own works see,  
 Distaff and loom, and keep thy house at one.  
 This business of the war men's care shall be,  
 Who dwell here in the land, and most of all to me."

In the last book is described the interview between Priam and Achilles:

But when unto Achilleus' hut they came  
Which Myrmidonian hands made for their king,  
Down cutting boughs of fir, and roofed the same  
With grassy thatch, from meadows gathering,  
And round it for that prince a mighty ring  
Of stakes they made: across the door there lay  
A single bar of fir: the enormous thing  
Tasked three to fix it, three to lift away,  
Of other men: the chief its weight alone could sway.



VISIT OF PRIAM TO ACHILLES.

Now Hermes oped it, and dismounting cried :  
" Old man, a blessed god thou seest in me,  
E'en Hermes, sent from Zeus to be thy guide :  
Now I go back, nor shall Achilleus see  
My face : for cause of just reproach 'twould be  
For gods of mortals to display their care.  
But go thou in, and clasp Achilleus' knee,  
And beg him by his sire and mother fair  
And his one darling child, that thou may'st speed thy prayer."

So saying, to high Olympus back did wend  
Hermes; and Priam lighted to the ground,  
Leaving Idæus there, who stayed to tend  
Horses and mules : the old man, onward bound,



Passed to where bode Achilleus ; him he found  
 There sitting : but his mates were elsewhere :  
 Automedon and Alcimus renowned,  
 These only waited : from his evening fare  
 The chief had newly ceased, and still the board was there.

Unseen great Priam entered, and came nigh,  
 And clasped his knees, and kissed that terrible hand  
 By which his many sons had come to die.  
 As one by Até driven, in his own land  
 Slaying a man, flies to a foreign strand,  
 To some rich house, and all that see are dazed,  
 So wondered he as Priam's face he scanned ;  
 Wondered the rest, and on each other gazed,  
 While Priam at his knee voice of entreaty raised :

"Think of thy sire, man of the godlike brow,  
 Of years like mine, on age's threshold drear !  
 Perchance his neighbors round him even now  
 Vex him, and none there is to ward off fear :  
 Yet he, when of thy living he doth hear,  
 Is glad at heart, and ever hopeth on  
 Back from the wars to see his offspring dear :  
 But I am all unhappy : many a son,  
 Valiant and brave, had I, but Fate hath spared me none.

"Full fifty were there when the Achaïans came :  
 Nineteen, the offspring of one womb were they :  
 Yea, seed I had of many a queenly dame.  
 But the more part have bowed their knees in fray :  
 And him, my pride, Troy and the Trojan's stay,  
 Thou slewest, for his country battling bold,  
 Hector : for him I seek the ships to-day,  
 To treat for ransom, charged with gifts untold.  
 But thou, revere the gods, and pity one so old !

"Think of thy sire ! I am forlorn yet,  
 Enforced to dare what none hath dared but I,  
 To kiss the hand that my son's blood made wet."  
 He heard, and for his sire was fain to sigh :  
 Gently he touched, and put the old man by.  
 So they two thinking, he of Hector dead,  
 Stretched at Achilleus' feet, wept bitterly,  
 While the other mourned his sire, or in his stead  
 Patroclus : and their groans through all the mansion spread.

But when of tears the chief had his desire,  
 And yearning from his heart and limbs had fled,  
 He rose, and by the hand raised up the sire,  
 Pitying the hoary beard and hoary head,  
 And soothingly bespake him, and thus said :  
 "Poor man ! woe's cup thou to the dregs dost drain.  
 How dar'dst thou journey all uncomraded  
 E'en to his face, whose ruthless hand hath slain  
 Thy many sons and brave ? of iron is thy heart's grain.

"Come, rise and seat thee : but, for this our grief,  
 Let it have rest, though smarting : for the chill  
 Of wintry sorrow yieldeth no relief :  
 Since for sad mortals thus the blest ones will,  
 To live in pain, while they are painless still.  
 Two casks there stand on Zeus' high palace-stair,  
 One laden with good gifts, and one with ill :  
 To whomso Zeus ordains a mingled share,  
 Now in due time with foul he meeteth, now with fair :

"But whoso gets but ill, that wretch forlorn  
 Red-ravening Hunger o'er the boon earth's face  
 Hounds, and he wanders, gods' and mortals' scorn.  
 So Peleus at his birth the gods did grace  
 With honor : born to rule a noble race,  
 He wived a goddess, though of mortal breed :  
 Yet e'en in his full cup the bale had place,  
 For in his house grew up no royal seed ;  
 One child alone is his, to early death decreed.

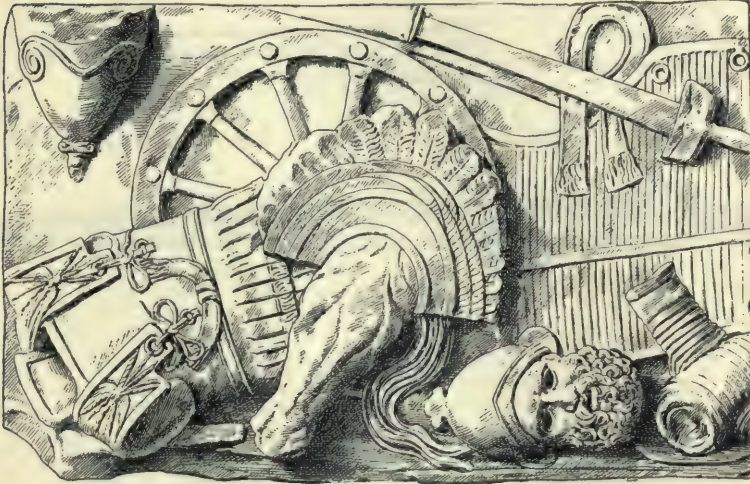
"Nor tend I his gray hairs, since far away  
 In Troy I sit, a scourge to thee and thine.  
 But thou of old wast highly blest, men say :  
 Far as the sun o'er Lesbos' isle doth shine  
 To Phrygia's plains and Helle's boundless brine,  
 Thou bar'st the palm for sons and treasure-store.  
 Now, since the curse hath come by will divine,  
 Around thy town are fightings evermore :  
 Yet cheer thee still, nor grieve so sadly and so sore.

"For nought 'twill stead thee for thy son to cry,  
 Nor wilt thou raise him, ere fresh ill thou dree."  
 And godlike Priam made thereto reply :  
 "Give me no seat, dread monarch, while with thee  
 My Hector lies untombed ; but set him free,  
 That I may see him, and take the gifts we bear ;  
 Heaven give thee pleasure of them, and make thee see  
 Thine home again, since thou hast heard my prayer,  
 And given me to see light and breathe the genial air."

To whom Achilleus, with dark-lowering brow :  
 "Stir me no more, old man : myself design  
 To loose thy son : one came from Zeus e'en now,  
 My mother, offspring of the salt sea brine.  
 Ay, Priam, I know thee well, some power divine  
 Hath led thee hither on thy bold emprise :  
 For no mere man, though of more strength than thine,  
 Could pass unchallenged by the warders' eyes,  
 Or lightly move the bar athwart our gate that lies.

"So stir not more my heart in my distress,  
 Lest thee, e'en thee, old man, I fail to spare,  
 Though suppliant thou, and Zeus' high will transgress."  
 He spake : the old man trembled, and was ware.  
 Then Peleus' son, like lion from his lair,  
 Sprang straight from out the chamber, of his train  
 Not unattended : for two squires were there,  
 Automedon and Alcimus, the twain  
 Whom most their chieftain prized, after Patroclus slain.

The mules and horses loosed they from the yoke,  
 And to the hut the old king's herald led  
 And set him on a seat : then out they took  
 The priceless recompense of Hector's head.  
 Two mantles left they, round the corpse to spread,  
 And a rich tunic, meet for his attire.  
 Then bade he bondmaids wash and oil the dead,  
 Apart, lest, looking on his son, the sire  
 In choler should break forth, and rouse Achilles' ire.



ARMOR FROM PERGAMON.

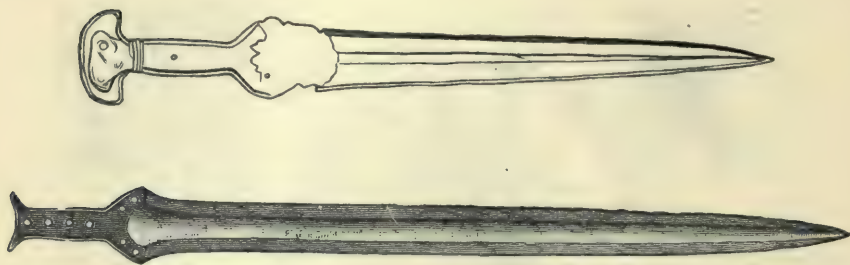
The fervor with which the battles are narrated may be gathered from this passage in the fourteenth book :

Quickly he sought the Earth-shaker with the news,  
 Stood by him, and spoke words with wings of wind:  
 " Now, great Poseidon, thine occasion use ;  
 Now give the Danaans fame, while Zeus is blind ;  
 For my strong spells have bound him, limbs and mind,  
 By Hera's blandishments to sleep betrayed."  
 Then went he to the tribes of human kind,  
 While *he*, spurred on the Danaan host to aid,  
 Leapt forth into their van, and loud monition made :

" What, Argives, shall we thus the day forego ?  
 Shall Hector burn our ships and glory gain ?  
 In sooth, he says, yea, boasts it shall be so,  
 Seeing Achilles doth from war refrain :  
 Yet scant that loss, if we who here remain  
 Be stirred to aid each other in the field.  
 Take we our largest shields of closest grain,  
 Our brows with beaming helmets safely steeled,  
 And in our valiant hands our longest javelins wield.



“Forward ! myself will lead : nor, spite his vaunt,  
 Will Hector dare abide when we rush on.  
 And let the brave who finds his buckler scant  
 Give it some weakling, and a larger don.”  
 Such words were his : and they obeyed each one :  
 And the great chieftains, though their wounds did gall,  
 Odysseus, Diomedes, and Atreus’ son,  
 Passed round the ranks and changed their weapons all :  
 The large the stronger took, the weaker sort the small.



SWORDS FROM MYCENÆ.

But when their flesh in gleaming brass was clad,  
 They moved to go : Poseidon led the way ;  
 In his huge hand a long keen sword he had,  
 Like lightning : yet therewith he might not slay  
 The ranks of foemen, but their hearts dismay.  
 Hector his Trojans ranged on the adverse side.  
 O, long and dreadful was the battle-fray  
 Waged by Poseidon there and Hector tried,  
 While Trojans he with help and he Achæians plied.

The sea was dashed up to the huts and fleet  
 Of Argos ; and they met with a loud yell.  
 Not sea-waves on the coast so loudly beat  
 As 'neath the north-wind they from ocean swell,  
 Nor fire enkindled in a mountain dell  
 In leaping on the wood so fierce doth roar,  
 Nor 'mid tall-foliaged oaks the winds so fell  
 Howls, of all things most terrible in its bore,  
 As Troy and Argos yelled when each on each they bore.

At Aias first his lance brave Hector threw  
 As front to front he faced him, nor yet erred,  
 But smote him on the breast, where baldricks two  
 Ran, one the shield and one the sword to gird ;  
 These checked the blow. Brave Hector's wrath was stirred  
 At such miscarriage : back he did retreat,  
 Shunning his fate : Aias, by anger spurred,  
 Caught a great stone of those that at their feet  
 Lay many, as they fought, props of the anchored fleet.

He whirled it like a quoit and spun it round ;  
 O'er the shield's rim, on to the neck it passed.

As some tall oak falls heavily to the ground  
 Smit by Zeus' thunder, and a sulphurous blast  
 Swift follows : whoso sees it is aghast,  
 For Zeus' sore thunderstrokes not soon are healed :  
 So in the dust fell Hector, tall and vast :  
 He dropped his lance, and on him fell his shield  
 And helmet, and all o'er his brazen armor pealed.

Hoping a prize, the foe with yells rushed on,  
 And showered a hail of darts, athirst for blood :  
 But stab or pierce they could not, ne'er a one,  
 For round him in a ring Polydamas stood  
 With great Æneas and Agenor good,  
 Brave Glaucus, and Sarpedon, Lycia's head ;  
 And of the rest each succored as he could,  
 And his broad shield before his chieftain spread :  
 And him, reared on their hands, his mates from battle sped.

So his steeds reached he, which behind the roar  
 Of battle stood, with car and charioteer :  
 Quickly they bare him homeward, groaning sore.  
 But soon as they came nigh that river clear,  
 Swift-eddying Xanthus, Zeus' own offspring dear,  
 They take him out and water on him pour :  
 He fetched a breath, and did his eyes uprear,  
 And sat couched up, disgorging the black gore :  
 Then back to earth he fell, and gloom his eyes came o'er.

Whom when the Argives saw from the field retire,  
 More fierce they rushed, and minded them of fight ;  
 Far foremost he who called Oileus sire,  
 Charging with pointed lance, did Satnius smite,  
 Whom erst on Satnio's banks a Naiad bright  
 Bore to his father Enops, shepherd swain ;  
 Him then Oileus' son, spear-famous wight,  
 Pierced in the flank : he fell, and o'er him slain  
 Trojans and Danaans there a desperate strife maintain.

Then to avenge the dead Polydamas came,  
 Panthous' brave son, who Prothoënor hit  
 On the right shoulder : the dart held its aim  
 On through the back : o'erthrown, the dust he bit.  
 And the slayer boasted loud, for all to wit :  
 "Not vainly from the stalwart arm, I ween,  
 Of Panthous' mighty son that lance did flit ;  
 Some Argive hath it, who thereon will lean,  
 And travel by its aid down to the house unseen."

He spoke : the Argives listened, smit with pain,  
 But most of all stout Aias' heart was rent,  
 Telamon's son ; for next him fell the slain.  
 At the retiring foe a lance he sent,  
 Who, springing quick aside, did death prevent :  
 So 'twas Antenor's son received the spear,  
 Archelochus : for Zeus his ruin meant :  
 It smote him where the head and neck come near,  
 Just at the neck's last joint, and cut the tendons sheer.

Head, mouth, and nostrils sooner touched the ground,  
 Than shins and knees, he falling. As he lay,  
 Aias outspoke to Panthous' son renowned :  
 "Think now, Polydamas, and truly say,  
 Will not this death for Prothoënor's pay?  
 No mean man seems he, nor of lineage base,  
 But brother to Antenor, good in fray,  
 Or son : for likest that his form and face."  
 So spoke he, knowing well : on Troy came grief apace.

Then Acamas, stalking his dead brother round,  
 Slew Promachus, who sought to drag the slain ;  
 And o'er him Acamas vaunted with loud sound :  
 "Not ours alone the labor and the bane,  
 Proud Argives, but yourselves sometimes are ta'en.  
 See how my spear hath given up to decay  
 This Theban, lest my brother's death remain  
 Long unrevenged : henceforth let each man pray  
 A brother may survive, to wipe his shame away."

He spoke : the Argives listened smit with pain,  
 But most of all Peneleos' heart was rent ;  
 Raging, on Acamas he rushed amain,  
 Who swerved aside, nor stayed the monarch's hent :  
 So on Ilioneus his good steel he bent,  
 The child of Phorbas, lord of cattle fair,  
 Who of all Trojans born did most content  
 Hermes, who gave him wealth to spend and spare :  
 To whom his consort bore Ilioneus, his sole heir.

Beneath his brow Peneleos thrust the spear  
 At the eye's root, and thence the pupil tore ;  
 Onward through eye and nape the point went sheer :  
 He sank to earth, his hands spread out before :  
 Forth flashed Peneleos his keen sword, and shore  
 Right through the neck, tumbling to earth the head  
 And helmet both : still the pierced eyeball bore  
 The javelin fixed : he, like a poppy red,  
 Lifted the gory prize, and to the Trojans said :

"Trojans, my heralds be, and bear my tale  
 To proud Ilioneus' sire and mother dear ;  
 Go, bid them in their palace weep and wail ;  
 For ne'er shall Promachus' beloved fere  
 Welcome her husband home with smiling cheer,  
 When once again we Argives cross the sea."  
 Thus boastfully he spoke : a ghastly fear  
 Took all their hearts, and each one eagerly  
 Looked round, by what way best the steep of doom to flee.

Now tell me, Muses, dwellers on heaven's height,  
 Who of the Achaians foremost won and wore  
 The red spoils, when Poseidon turned the fight.  
 First Telamonian Aias shed the gore  
 Of Hyrtius, who command o'er Mysians bore :  
 Likewise Antilochus stout Mermerus slew,  
 And Phalkes : Mériones their harness tore  
 From Morys and Hippotion : Teucer true  
 Sent Prothoön down to death and Periphetes too.



But valiant Menelaus in the flank  
Pierced Hyperenor, shepherd of his train ;  
The steel raged onward, and his entrails drank,  
And through the ghastly wound the soul in pain  
Went speedily, and on his eyes amain  
The death-cloud fell : but Ajax most did smite,  
Oileus' swift-foot son : for o'er the plain  
None else could follow with a step so light,  
When warrior hearts grow faint, and Zeus impels to flight.



BATTLE SCENE.

### CHAPTER III.—THE ODYSSEY.

I.—The Difference between the Iliad and the Odyssey, and the Resultant Discussion—An Analysis of the Latter Poem. II.—Some of the Qualities of this Poem—Its Coherence and Simplicity—The Naïveté of the Heroes—The Explanation of the Poem as a Solar Myth. III.—Illustrative Extracts.

#### I.

THE Odyssey is very unlike the Iliad, and the difference between them has been expressed in very many ways: that the Iliad was written for men, and the Odyssey for women, and, as Aristotle well put it, that the Iliad is pathetic and simple, the Odyssey ethical and complicated. And while the two poems are, according to immemorial custom, ascribed to the one Homer, there were already in antiquity some critics who conjectured that the Odyssey was the work of another author. When the Homeric discussion began, about a century ago, it was about the Iliad that the fight was fought; it was generally conceded that, however opinions might vary with regard to that poem, the Odyssey was secure from any assault, that the most captious would be unable to detect incoherences and confusion in it. Of late years, it is to be noticed, scientific examination has discovered weak spots in its defenses, and openings for assault. Indeed, we are justified in saying that the battle has begun and promises to be a hot one. Yet even when the struggle is over and half the world finds inconsistencies and errors and repetitions where now there appears an unbroken front, the poem will remain, as the Iliad remains, a rich source of delight for many generations of readers.

The obvious differences between the Iliad, with its incessant record of personal conflicts, and the Odyssey, which narrates the adventures of Odysseus in his return to his home from the Trojan war, have been called only such dissimilarities as might naturally exist between the work of a man's youth and that of his riper years, but, as we shall see later, this explanation fails to cover all the ground on which sappers and miners are at work against the notion of Homeric unity. We are, perhaps, only safe in placing the Iliad and Odyssey together as products of what may be called an epic period, and even of the Greeks it is true that the flowering season of any one literary form is of brief duration. At any rate, both these poems belong to the cycle of the

Trojan war. Ten years had been spent in preparations for that struggle; the siege lasted ten years, and Odysseus spent ten years making his way back to his home. His adventures on the journey form the subject of the poem.

When it begins, Odysseus had for nine years after the fall of Troy been exposed to the wrath of Poseidon, but now at last the gods decide that his wanderings shall cease. The nymph Calypso is meanwhile detaining the hero against his will in the remote western island Ogygia, and thither Hermes is sent to demand his release. Athene also hastens to Ithaca to carry comfort to Telemachus, the son of Odysseus, and to encourage him to take certain measures in preparation for his father's return. She enters the house of Odysseus in the guise of Mentès, an old friend, and is warmly welcomed by Telemachus, who laments his sorrows in that the sons of all the neighboring lords are continually reveling in his house, devouring his substance, in order to compel his mother to choose one of them for her husband, knowing well that the one whom she selects will thereby become the king of Ithaca. Athene counsels him to ask the people for aid against the shameless suitors, and then to set forth upon a journey in order to get news of his long missing father. Telemachus is at once encouraged



ODYSSEUS.

to boldness; he blames his mother, who is averse to listening to the songs of Phemius, the old bard, about the sad return of the Achæans, and speaks with severity to the suitors, whose suspicions are aroused by the visit and sudden departure of Mentès. When evening comes the suitors depart, and Telemachus is conducted to his sleeping-room by his old nurse, Eurycleia. (Book I.) The next morning the people are summoned to an assembly, when Telemachus brings bitter accusations against the suitors and asks for the assistance of the people. The suitors, however, throw the blame on Penelope, who has for years been putting them off on the pretext that



before marrying a second husband she must finish a shroud for the old father of Odysseus, but as much as she weaves in a day she unravels at night, and thus postpones her choice ; but if she will select one of the wooers, Telemachus will have peace. While the discussion is going on, in answer to a prayer uttered by Telemachus, two eagles appear rending each other, a sight that is interpreted by one of those present as a token of the overthrow of the suitors, who reject this interpretation with some warmth. After more discussion, the assembly breaks up, and Telemachus, going to the sea-



ITHACA.

shore, prays to Athene, who appears in the form of Mentor and encourages him to undertake his journey; promising to secure him a ship and companions. Telemachus returns to his dwelling, where the suitors treat him with insult which he meets with dignity, and then he proceeds to prepare for his journey. He makes Eurycleia swear that she will not mention his plan to his mother before twelve days, and then he returns to the suitors. After sunset he sets off with Athene, who still appears as Mentor, and with the oarsmen to visit old Nestor at Pylos. His departure is not observed by the suitors, for Athene made them dull and drowsy. (Book II.) Early the next morning they land at Pylos, being warmly welcomed by the men who are gathered on the shore to offer a sacrifice, and participate in the rites. Then Telemachus, being encouraged by Athene, tells Nestor who he is, and that he has come to get information about his absent father. But Nestor in a long speech answers that he can give him no



NAUSIKAA AND ODYSSEUS.



news of Odysseus, for when the Achaians were making ready to return, dissensions broke out, and he started with a party to which Odysseus did not belong. After some more talk, in which they lament the terrible murder of Agamemnon by Ægisthus and Clytemnestra, and speak of the vengeance wrought by Orestes, his son, Nestor advises Telemachus to consult Menelaus in Sparta, who had for many years wandered in strange regions. Meanwhile the day is nearly spent, and Telemachus follows Nestor to his palace. But Athene takes the form of an eagle and flies away, surprising every one and delighting Nestor, who perceives that Telemachus is a favorite of the gods, and he at once proposes a sacrifice to Athene, which is offered up the next day. Then Telemachus, accompanied by Nestor's son Pisistratus, starts in a chariot to Sparta, where they arrive after a two days' journey. (Book III.) There, too, Telemachus finds a feast going on, for Menelaus is celebrating the marriage of two of his children, and he is received with the same hospitality. Telemachus is amazed at the splendor of the house, and when Menelaus happens to speak of Odysseus, tears gush from the eyes of Telemachus; at that moment Helen enters the room and she at once recognizes the son of Odysseus. Thereupon so many mournful memories are evoked that all present burst into tears, which Helen dispels by a magic potion that she puts into their wine. Then they talk for a long time about Odysseus until the evening grows late. Early the next morning, Menelaus, who sympathizes keenly with Telemachus's domestic sorrows, asks him his errand, but he can give no satisfactory information about Odysseus; he says, however, that when he was in Egypt the sea-god Proteus had told him the fate of many of the heroes of the Trojan war: of the younger Ajax, of his brother Agamemnon, and of Odysseus that on the island of Calypso he was in vain yearning for home. Thereupon they betake themselves to breakfast. Meanwhile the suitors have discovered the departure of Telemachus, and they determine to lie in wait for him in the strait between Ithaca and Samos and to slay him. Penelope also learns that Telemachus is gone, and is filled with grief; by the advice of Eurycleia, who confesses her knowledge, she prays to Athene. The suitors send off a galley to capture Telemachus, and Penelope, who has fallen asleep, has her apprehensions regarding her son's fate pacified by a vision sent by Athene. (Book IV.) The perils which still surround Odysseus move Athene to urge before Zeus his speedy return; consequently Hermes is at once sent to Calypso with orders to let him go immediately. The command fills her with indignation at the gods, who are forever breaking up the love-affairs of the goddesses, but she obeys. She seeks Odysseus, whom she finds on



the shore, weeping from homesickness, and announces to him his speedy departure. At first he can not believe her, but when she confirms her statement with a solemn oath, he is convinced, and only with difficulty represses his delight. The next morning he begins to build a raft, which is finished in four days, and on the fifth he sets forth. On the eighteenth day of his voyage he sights the land of the Phæacians, when Poseidon, who is indignant at his escape, sends out a furious storm that dismasts the boat and renders it unmanageable. By the advice of the sea-nymph Leucothea, who comes to the surface

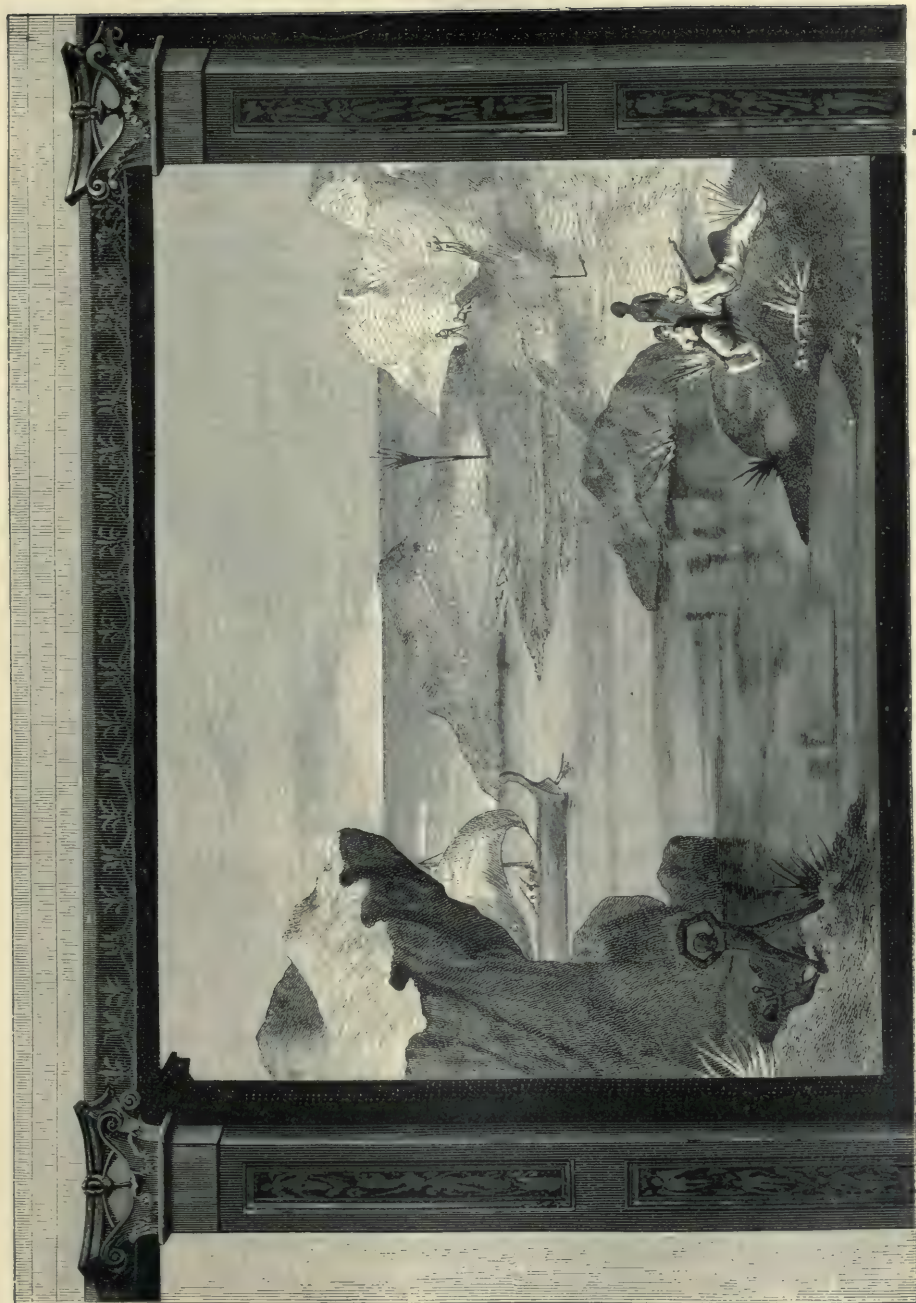


ODYSSEUS REVEALING HIMSELF TO NAUSICAA.  
(From a Vase Painting.)

from the bottom of the sea, Odysseus takes off his clothes, wraps himself in a veil which she gives him, and leaps into the water to try to swim to the shore. For two days and two nights he swims towards it, aided by the north wind, and after many struggles he reaches the mouth of a river which carries him to land. Thoroughly exhausted, he crawls under some bushes and falls asleep. (Book V.) Nausicaa, the daughter of the Phæacian king, Alcinous, being instigated by a dream sent by Athene, goes down to the shore with some companions to wash her clothes at the mouth of the river. This done, after a bath and food, they all play ball together. Nausicaa accidentally throws the ball into the water, whereupon they all scream and awaken Odysseus, who crawls forth from beneath the bushes and asks for clothes. Nausicaa has a mantle given him and makes preparation to conduct him to her father. When they reach the grove of Athene, Odysseus stops to pray to that goddess. (Book VI.) Guided by Athene, who appears in the form of a maiden carrying water, Odysseus goes to the house of Alcinous and admires its splendor. The goddess envelops him in a cloud that renders him invisible until he comes to the king and to the queen, Arete, when he clasps the queen's knees in supplication. Alcinous

receives him kindly, and when the elders are gone, the queen asks him who he is and whence he comes, whereupon he recounts what has happened to him from the time he reached Calypso's island until he landed among the Phæacians. (Book VII.) The next morning Alcinous proposes in an assembly of the people that preparations be made for sending Odysseus on his way, and that the princes and rowers should have a feast in the halls of the palace. Here Demodocus, the minstrel, sings before the king and his guests the story of a quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles, and Odysseus is moved to tears, but Alcinous alone notices his emotion and suggests that they go forth to witness the athletic sports. After Odysseus has beaten every one at throwing the heavy weight, Demodocus sings of the loves of Ares and Aphrodite, and dances close the entertainment. All the princes bring valuable presents for Odysseus, and Arete has them packed in chests. After supper Demodocus sings of the wooden horse and the capture of Troy with such pathos that Odysseus is again moved to tears, and Alcinous urges him to tell his name and his adventures. (Book VIII.) Odysseus now begins to recount his varied experiences from his departure from Troy until he met Calypso. He describes his landing among the Cicones in Thrace, the capture of their city, and the subsequent defeat of the Achæians with the loss of six men from each ship. Then, after being driven for ten days by a fierce north wind, they reached the land of the lotos-eaters, whence they made their way to the land of the Cyclopes. There they had a curious adventure with Polyphemus, whom Odysseus blinded and from whose rage they with difficulty escaped. (Book IX.) From the land of the Cyclopes Odysseus and the survivors sailed to the floating island where lived Æolus, who sent them away with a favorable west wind, first giving them a huge wallet inclosing the other winds. Some of Odysseus's companions opened this wallet in sight of Ithaca, while Odysseus was asleep, and the winds bursting forth drove the ship back to the Æolian islands, but the ruler spurned them as men detested of the gods. Hence they wandered for six days, and on the seventh day they reached the man-eating Læstrygonians, who destroyed all the ships with their crews, except the one of Odysseus, who came next to the Ææan island where dwelt Circe. Odysseus sent some of his men to this magician, who at once transformed them into swine. When Odysseus himself visited her, he escaped her arts by means of the magical herb moly, a gift from Hermes; he won the goddess's love, secured the return of his friends to human form, and remained with her for a year. He then persuaded her to let him go, after she had prophesied that he must descend into Hades in order to learn from the shade of the seer Teiresias the manner of his return





ODYSSEUS IN THE LOWER WORLD.  
(From the *Odyssey-Landscapes in the Vatican.*)



and his final fate. Circe gave him instructions which Odysseus followed, after Elpenor had failed. (Book X.) He sailed away over the ocean until he reached the entrance of the under world, when he offered sacrifice, at which the souls of the departed assembled. The ghost of Elpenor appeared and besought the rites of burial, then appeared Teiresias, who prophesied to Odysseus. Next appeared his mother, followed by the spirits of famous heroines, Tyro, Antiope, Alcmene, Epicaste, Chloris, Lede, Iphimedeia, Phaedra, Ariadne, Maera and Clymene. When at this point of his narration Odysseus pauses, all urge him to go on, and he continues, telling them how he



TRANSFORMED COMRADES OF ODYSSEUS.

saw the ghosts of the heroes, Agamemnon, Achilles, Ajax, Minos, and what they said. After he had beheld the sufferings of some wicked men, Tityus, Tantalus, and Sisyphus, and mighty Heracles, he returned to the upper world. (Book XI.) After his return to the Ææan island Odysseus buried Elpenor's body and received further directions from Circe concerning his further journey. He set sail with a favorable wind, passed safely by the Sirens with their fascinating voices, and evaded the Wandering Rocks, passing between Scylla and Charybdis, although Scylla seized six of his trustiest companions, and finally came to the island of Helios, the sun-god. There some of the men, against the advice of Odysseus, being impelled by hunger, slaughtered some of the consecrated cattle, for which sacrilege a fearful tempest fell upon them after they had set sail once more, that wrecked the ship and drowned all but Odysseus, who managed to escape on fragments of the vessel and to reach the island of Ogygia, where he was

detained by Calypso. (Book XII.) Here ends his recital, which began in the ninth book ; his further adventures after leaving Ogygia are told in the seventh book.

After finishing his narrative Odysseus receives further presents from the Phæacians, partakes of a parting meal, and embarks in the ship which carries him while he sleeps through the night to Ithaca. Before he wakes up they set him ashore near the haven of Phorcys, and land all his presents, but the ship of the Phæacians on his way back is turned into stone by Poseidon. When Odysseus wakes up, Athene had enveloped him in a thick mist so that he did not recognize his native land. The goddess soon appears to him in the guise of a young shepherd and tells him where he is, assuming once more her divine form and dispelling the mist. She then helps him to conceal his presents in a cave, and after they have devised a plan for murdering the suitors, she changes him into an old beggar. (Book XIII.) In this disguise Odysseus makes his way to the hut of the swineherd Eumæus, who receives him kindly and gives him further information concerning the misdeeds of the suitors. Eumæus asks who he is, and Odysseus tells him a long story partly true and partly invented, trying to induce the swineherd to believe that his master shall return. After supper, by a characteristic device, he wheedles a warm mantle from Eumæus, and sleeps in the hut while the swineherd lies down by the swine. (Book XIV.) Meanwhile, Telemachus, who is still with Menelaus in Sparta, is advised by Athene, who appears to him in a dream, to return home, and is warned of the hostile preparations of the suitors. Consequently, after a final banquet, Telemachus, laden with gifts, starts off in company with Pisistratus to rejoin his comrades in the ship. He embarks at once, taking with him an Argive seer named Theoclymenus who had fled from his country for murder. While Telemachus is thus journeying back, Eumæus recounts a story of his youth to Odysseus until late in the night. At dawn Telemachus lands in Ithaca, and after providing for Theoclymenus, goes to the hut of Eumæus, as Athene had ordered. (Book XV.) There he meets the beggar, whom he does not recognize, and sends Eumæus to the city to inform his mother of his return. During his absence Athene bids Odysseus to make himself known to his son, and they arrange the discomfiture and death of the suitors. Toward evening Eumæus returns to his hut. (Book XVI.) The next morning Telemachus alone visits his mother and tells her about his journey and introduced to her the seer Theoclymenus. Soon Odysseus appears, still disguised as a beggar, and led by Eumæus ; on his way he is shamefully treated by Melanthius, the goatherd. As he enters the house his old dog Argos recognizes him and dies. Odysseus



begs of the suitors, who generously give him something, but one, Antinous, abuses him and beats him with a footstool. Penelope asks to speak with the beggar, but he postpones talking with her until evening. (Book XVII.) The common beggar Irus tries to drive Odysseus away as an intruder, and the suitors, noting the quarrel, arrange a fight between them, in which Irus is worsted, to the amusement of the spectators, and Odysseus at once becomes a favorite. Penelope then makes her appearance, endowed by Athene with every charm; she makes new promises to the suitors and receives from them precious gifts. After she has withdrawn, Odysseus is railed at by her attendant women and is again ill-treated by the suitors, who then betake themselves to rest. (Book XVIII.) Odysseus is left alone in the hall with Telemachus, and they both carry the arms away, aided by a light which Athene sends to them, and Telemachus goes to rest. Then Penelope appears and asks the seeming beggar where he comes from. He replies with a mixture of truth and falsehood, and concludes with the assurance that Odysseus will return in the same year with a new moon. She then commends him to the care of Eurycleia, his old nurse, who is much struck by his resemblance to Odysseus. She prepares a footbath and bathes him, and recognizes her master by the scar of a wound on his foot that he had received long since from a boar that he was hunting. Odysseus with difficulty silences her as she starts to betray his secret. Penelope resumes the conversation and recounts a dream which she has had, which Odysseus interprets as a prophecy of the speedy destruction of the suitors and urges her to let the suitors on the morrow test their strength with the bow of Odysseus. All then separate for the night. (Book XIX.) Odysseus, however, can find no rest, being harassed with thoughts of the morrow's contest, and Penelope sighs and laments till daybreak. Odysseus hears her weeping and prays to Zeus, who thunders as a sign of good omen. The hall fills up once more; the women, Telemachus and Eumæus appear; the insolent goatherd brings the goats for the dinner, and Philoetius, the cattle. This last-named greets Odysseus with kindness, who lets him and Eumæus know that Odysseus is near and will soon slay the suitors. Even now these are gathering for the morning meal, devising the death of Telemachus. Once more their insolence breaks out: one of them hurls an ox's foot at Odysseus, who just escapes it. They all go on with their feasting, laughing wildly together. Theoclymenus speaks of ominous horrors and apparitions that present themselves, and leaves the hall. Telemachus himself is insulted by the suitors. (Book XX.) Then Penelope brings out her husband's bow, the very sight of which calls forth harrowing memories, and promises that the one who can bend it and send



an arrow through the rings of twelve axes shall be her husband. Telemachus takes it, and saying that if he can do the deed his mother shall not leave her home, would have succeeded had not Odysseus made him a sign that he should desist. Then the soothsayer who had already denounced the wooers tried in vain to bend the bow, and others also failed. Meanwhile Eumæus and Philoetius go out of the house, followed by Odysseus, who tells them who he is, and what they are to do in the approaching fray; then they all return to the hall. When Odysseus asks to be allowed to try the yet unstrung bow, the suitors abuse him, but Penelope urges that he be allowed to try, and Telemachus still further insists upon it, at the same time bidding his mother to leave the hall. The swineherd gives the bow to the beggar and has the doors of the hall and outer gates quietly barred. The beggar easily strings the bow and the arrow flies through the ax-rings to the annoyance of the suitors. Telemachus takes his place by his side, armed with sword and lance. (Book XXI.) Odysseus, throwing off his rags, springs upon the great threshold, and with another arrow kills Antinous; the suitors spring up and look in vain for their weapons. Eurymachus in vain prays for mercy. Telemachus fetches arms for his father and himself and for the two trusty men who are with them. Athene also joins them, and the fray begins; but the spears of the wooers are powerless, those of Odysseus and his little band never miss, and every one of them is put to death except the minstrel Phemius and the herald Medon. The women set every thing to rights; the guilty women are hanged, Melanthius, the treacherous goatherd, is slain, and the whole place cleansed. The women who had remained faithful welcome their master. (Book XXII.) Eurycleia announces to Penelope the joyful tidings of her husband's return and the slaughter of the wooers, but she is still afraid to believe it. She comes down to the hall and sits for a long time opposite her husband without a word, although Telemachus upbraids her lack of confidence. Odysseus orders that a marriage festival be celebrated, in order to deceive the neighbors with regard to what has happened. Then he convinces Penelope, by recalling reminiscences, that he can be no other than Odysseus, and in the night, that is miraculously prolonged, the husband and wife recount all that has befallen them during their separation. The next morning Odysseus, Telemachus, and the faithful herdsmen start to see Laertes, the aged father of Odysseus. (Book XXIII.) Hermes conducts the souls of the wooers to the lower world, where are assembled the ghosts of many of the Achaian heroes; among them, Agamemnon, who calls Odysseus happy in that his wife is so faithful. Meanwhile Odysseus comes to the house of Laertes, whom

he finds at work in his garden. The old man faints when Odysseus makes himself known. A meal is at once prepared, and the old servants express their delight. Only one thing remains to be done,



PENELOPE.

the report of the slaying of the suitors has created a tumult in the city, and an armed band comes forth to put Odysseus and his men to death. They seize their weapons, Athene gives Laertes new strength, and he overthrows the leaders of the hostile company; the rest, after a futile combat, run away, and the bonds between Odysseus and his people are again confirmed. (Book XXIV.)



## II.

Thus ends what one is within bounds in calling the best story in the world, for certainly in naturalness, in abundance of interest, in wealth of adventure and fullness as well as delicacy in the study of character, no epic poem approaches it. The Persian and Sanskrit epics lack the coherence and moderation of the Greek work; the Nibelungenlied certainly does not share its completeness; and the epics that have been written in later times too often bear the mark of imitation, to endure comparison with the greater originals. Moreover, we find in Homer a vivid enjoyment of the world and of life which is immediately to be distinguished from the quality of literary perception of what is beautiful that characterizes his successors. Something of this charm which is most manifest in him lingers throughout all the best part of Greek literature, but we soon become aware that the writers perceive the complexity of the world and of human experience. They know as well as we do, that happiness comes but in flashes, although their temperament often inclined them not to insist on this open secret. In Homer, however, life is comparatively simple: the gods, whose pedigree has become obscure, so that their origin as personification of natural forces is lost, are often scarcely more than companions, or older brothers, of men. A god is feared and loved simply because he is more powerful than human beings; he is a good friend and a dangerous enemy. Plato's remark that man is a god to a dog, well illustrates the Homeric relation of humanity to the divine beings above it; they are exalted men of sometimes inexplicable passions and wayward fancies, but representatives of power rather than of right. The moral code which is thus reflected on the rulers of the world is a very simple one. In the Iliad bravery and magnanimity are seen among all the heroes and notably in Achilles; in the Odyssey it is the ingenuity of Odysseus that is presented for admiration, and in the others, faithfulness. Odysseus rather eludes than confronts peril, yet we who are thoroughly accustomed to travel, may perhaps not readily understand just how much was implied in the way in which Odysseus faced the dangers of the sea. That the audience who heard the poem were a home-abiding people becomes evident from various allusions therein. The journey of Telemachus to Pylos is spoken of as a serious undertaking. "Who knows," a proud youth would say, "but that he himself, if he goes hence on the hollow ship, may perish wandering far from his friends, even as Odysseus?" The nautical excellence of the Phæacians is extraordinarily praised as something abnormal, and the perils of the sea are made very prominent. Thus, Eumæus tells Telemachus, "Since thou wentest in thy ship to Pylos, never



to this hour, they say, hath he eaten and drunken as before, nor looked to the labors of the field, but with groaning and lamentation he sits sorrowing, and the flesh wastes away about his bones." Yet part of the mental and physical disturbance here and elsewhere may be explained as nervousness arising from the importance of his voyage. In the hands of a poet every thing would tend to lending weight to the main story and to making impressive, in this case, the necessity that Odysseus should return. Yet there is no such defense of the perturbation of Menelaus when Proteus tells him that he must go from the island Pharos to the mouth of the Nile to perform sacrifices: "So spake he, but my spirit within me was broken, in that he bade me again to go to Ægyptus over the misty deep, a long and grievous way." Moreover, Odysseus frankly expresses his detestation of a sea-faring life, and doubtless his words found an echo among the early hearers of the Homeric poems, whose feelings are thus reflected with what may be called prehistoric accuracy, in these pictures of the horrors of the sea. Fortunately Homer had no desire to ascribe impossible emotions to his heroes.

The poem is apparently an old story retold, for besides the fact that throughout literature there is no evidence of absolute originality, there are many incidents in the Odyssey, such as the parts taken by the gods, which can be explained only as allusions to fading traditions of a remote past. One of the more interesting of the attempts to interpret the original significance of these epics is that, already referred to, which sees in them late versions of solar myths. The Iliad bears a striking resemblance to what we find in the Rig Veda, in which the Panis, the spirits of night and winter, steal the cattle of the sun and carry them by an uncertain path to a dark cave somewhere in the East. Indra sends forth Sarama, the dawn, to bring them back. Sarama is tempted by the Panis to disobey his commands, but she returns with the desired information, as Helenus returns home with the treasures of which Menelaus had been robbed by Paris. Indra and the solar heroes can not recover their treasures, however, until they capture the offspring of Brisaya, the violet light of dawn, as Achilles captures the daughter of Briseis. In the same way in the Iliad, Achilles is separated from Briseis and finds her again only at the end. The hero leaves the field, as the sun withdraws behind a dark cloud, and finally at evening, when Briseis returns, he reappears and kills the cloud that had nearly overcome the heroes of daylight, but as he conquers he is near his own death at the hands of the evil night-hero, Pani. Sir George William Cox, in his "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," and his "Tales of Ancient Greece," illustrates in this way both the Iliad

and the Odyssey by comparing them with the Veda, the Edda, and the Nibelungenlied.

Of the Odyssey he speaks as follows :

"When Odysseus goes to Troy, he is simply a chieftain in the great host which went to recover the treasure taken from the West, like the Argonauts in their search for the Golden Fleece. But all these eastward expeditions are successful. The robber or seducer is despoiled of his prey, and the victors must journey back to their distant home. Thus, round the chieftain of each tribe would gather again all the ideas suggested by the ancient myths ; and the light reflected from the glory of the great Phthiotic hero might well rest on the head of Odysseus as he turns to go from Ilion. Thus would begin a new career, not unlike that of Herakles or Perseus in all its essential features. Throughout the whole poem the one absorbing desire which fills the heart of Odysseus is to reach his home once more and see the wife whom, like most other mythical heroes, he had been obliged to leave in the spring-time of his career. There are grievous toils and many hindrances on his way, but nothing can turn him from his course. He has to fight, like Herakles and Perseus, Theseus and Bellerophôn, with more than mortal beings and more than earthly powers, but he has the strength which they had to overcome or to evade them. It is true that he conquers chiefly by strength of will and sagacity of mind ; but this again is the phase which the idea of Helios, the great eye of day, as surveying and scanning every thing, assumes in Medeia, Prometheus, Asklêpios, Oidipous, Iamos, and Melampous. The other phase, however, is not wanting. He, too, has a bow which none but he can wield,\* and he wields it to terrible purpose, when, like Achilleus, after his time of disguise, he bursts on the astonished suitors, as the sun breaks from the stormcloud before he sinks to rest. So, again, in his westward wanderings (for this is the common path of the children of Zeus or Helios), he must encounter fearful dangers. It is no unclouded sky which looks down on him as he journeys toward the rocky Ithaka. He has to fight with Kyklôpes and Laistrygonians ; he has to shun the snares of the Seirens and the jaws of Skylla and Charybdis, as Perseus had to overcome the Gorgons, and Theseus to do battle with the Minotauros. Yet there are times of rest for him, as for Herakles and Bellerophôn. He yearns for the love of Penelopê, but his grief can be soothed for awhile by the affection of Kirkê and Kalypso, as Achilleus found solace in that of Diomêdê, and Herakles awhile in that of Dêianeira. Nay, wherever he goes, mortal kings and chiefs and undying goddesses seek to make him tarry by their side, as Menelaos sought to retain Paris in his home by the side of the Spartan Helen, and as Gunnar strove to win Sigurd to be the husband of his sister. So is it with Alkinoös ; but, in spite of the loveliness and purity of Nausikaâ, Odysseus may not tarry in the happy land of the Phaiakians, even as he might not tarry in the palace of the wise Kirkê or the sparkling cave of the gentle Kalypso. At last he approaches his home ; but he returns to it unknown and friendless. The sky is as dark as when Achilleus lay nursing his great wrath

\*Odyssey, xxi., 405, κ. τ. λ. The phraseology of the poet here assumes, perhaps without his being fully aware of it, the same tone with the narrative which tells of the arming of Achilleus. Others have tried with all their might to bend the bow. Odysseus stretches it without the least effort (*ἄτερ σπονδῆς*), and the sound of the string is like the whizzing of a swallow in its flight. In an instant every heart is filled with dread, and every cheek turns pale (*πᾶσι χρῶς ἐτράπετο*), and, to complete the imagery, they hear at the same moment the crash of the thunder in the sky.



behind the veil of his sorrow. Still he too, like Achilleus, knows how to take vengeance on his enemies ; and in stillness and silence he makes ready for the mortal conflict in which he knows that in the end he must be victorious. His foes are many and strong ; and, like Patroklos against Hektor, Telemachos\* can do but little against the suitors, in whom are reflected the Trojan enemies of the Achaians. But for him also, as for Achilleus, there is aid from the gods. Athênê, the daughter of the sky, cheers him on, and restores him to the glorious beauty of his youth, as Thetis clothed her child in the armour of Hephaistos, and Apollôn directed his spear against Hektor. Still in his ragged beggar's dress, like the sun behind the rent and tattered clouds, he appears in his own hall on the day of doom. The old bow is taken down from the wall, and none but he can be found to stretch it. His enemies begin to fear that the chief has indeed returned to his home, and they crouch in terror before the stranger, as the Trojans quailed at the mere sight and war-cry of Achilleus. But their cry for mercy falls as vain as that of Lykâôn or of Hektor, who must die to avenge the dead Patroklos ; for the doom of the suitors is come for the wrongs which they had done to Penelopê. The fatal bow is stretched. The arrows fly deadly and unerring as the spear of Artemis, and the hall is bathed in blood. There is nothing to stay his arm till all are dead. The sun-god is taking vengeance on the clouds, and trampling them down in his fury. The work is done ; and Penelopê sees in Odysseus the husband who had left her long ago to face his toils, like Herakles and Perseus. But she will try him still. If indeed he be the same, he will know his bridal chamber and the cunningly carved couch which his own hands had wrought. Iolê will try whether Herakles remembers the beautiful net-work of violet clouds which he spread as her couch in the morning. The sun is setting in peace. Penelopê, fair as Oinônê and as pure (for no touch of defilement must pass on her, or on Iolê or Daphnê or Briseis), is once again by his side. The darkness is utterly scattered ; the corpses of the suitors and of the handmaidens who ministered to them cumber the hall no more. A few flying vapours rush at random across the sky, as the men of Ithaka raise a feeble clamour in behalf of the slain chieftains. Soon these, too, are gone. Penelopê and Odysseus are within their bridal chamber. Oinônê has gone to rest with Paris by her side ; but there is no gloom in the house of Odysseus, and the hero lives still, strong and beautiful as in the early days. The battle is over. The one yearning of his heart has been fulfilled. The sun has laid him down to rest

In one unclouded blaze of living light.

If this theory of the solar myths is the true explanation, and it certainly seems at least to point out the direction from which light may come, it enables us to comprehend what is archaic in these poems, and, moreover, teaches us to admire the art of the Greeks in lending to what was the common property of the Aryan races so many attractive qualities. These traditional stories formed, as it were, the material for a competitive examination of the different peoples, and that from which the East Indian family drew inspiration for religious lyrics, became the subject of epic poetry among the Scandinavian,

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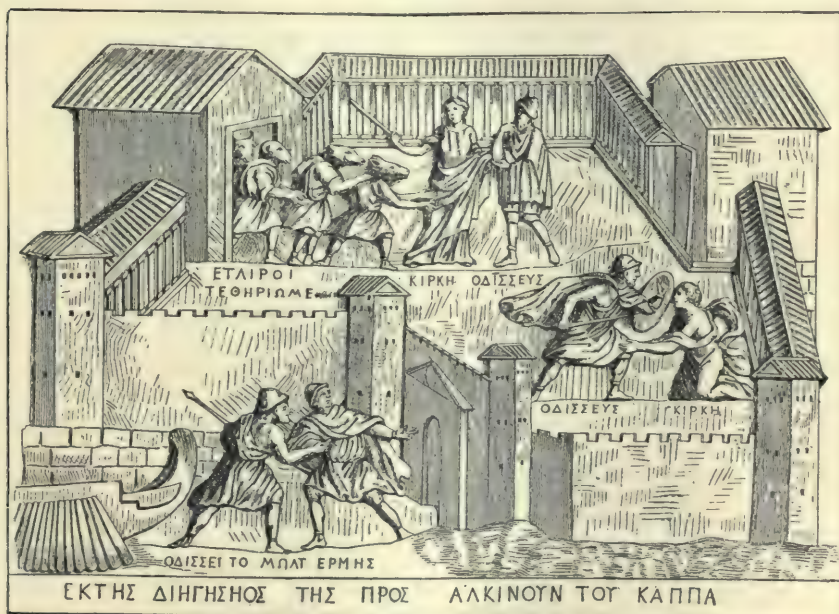
\* Grote, *History of Greece*, Vol. II., page 238.



Teutonic and Hellenic races, who sang their own versions of the old myths common to all the Aryan nations. The Greek civilization, the beautiful land in which it flourished, and possibly some brief period of unusual success, enabled some poet or poets to compose the epics which stand forever without a rival, for every poet is but the resultant of the many forces of the time in which he lives. This explanation obviously fails to give ground for any historical lessons to be learned from Homer, but, on the other hand, as Sir George Cox says, "it reveals to us a momentous chapter in the history of the human mind."

## III.

In choosing extracts from the *Odyssey* we shall find that the story within the story, that is to say, the hero's recital of his own adventures, is told with the most vivid interest. Thus in the ninth book :



ADVENTURES OF ODYSSEUS WITH CIRCE.

I, then, Odysseus am, Laertes' son,  
 For all wise policies a name of fear  
 To men ; my rumor to the skies hath gone.  
 And sunward Ithaca my country dear  
 I boast. Hill Neritus stands waving there  
 His green trees visible for many a mile ;  
 Centre of soils divine, which, clustering near,  
 Stars of the blue sea, round about him smile,  
 Dulichium, Same steep, Zacynthus' wood-crowned isle.

Thus lies the land high-tabled in the main  
 Westward; the others take the morning sun;  
 Rough, but a good nurse, and divine in grain  
 Her heroes. Never can I gaze upon  
 Land to my mind so lovely as that one,  
 Land not to be forgotten — aye, though me  
 Calypso in her caves would fain have won,  
 And Circe, deep-embowered within the sea,  
 Held me with artful wiles her own true love to be.

Never could these the inward heart persuade,  
 Never make sweet the cold unfaithfulness.  
 More than all pleasures that were ever made  
 Parents and fatherland our life still bless.  
 Though we rich home in a strange land possess,  
 Still the old memories about us cling.  
 But hear, while I the bitter woes express,  
 Which, as from Troia I my comrades bring,  
 Zeus, the Olympian Sire, around my life did fling.

Me winds to Ismarus from Ilion bear,  
 To the Ciconians. I their town lay waste,  
 And wives and wealth with my companions share,  
 That none for me might sail away disgraced.  
 Anon I urged them with quick feet to haste  
 Their flight, but they, infatuate fools, forbore —  
 There the red wine they ever dreaming taste,  
 While carcasses of sheep lie many a score,  
 And trailing-footed beeves, slain on the barren shore.

But all this while, on other works intent,  
 Loudly the Cicons to the Cicons call,  
 Who more and braver hold the continent.  
 These both from horseback cope with heroes tall,  
 Or foot to foot can make their foemen fall.  
 Wrapt in the morning mist they loom in view,  
 Thick as the leaves and flowers ambrosial,  
 Children of Spring. Onward the dark fate drew,  
 Big with the woes which Zeus had destined for our due.

Hard by the swift ships, each in ordered line,  
 With steely spears the battle they darrayne.  
 While toward the zenith clomb the day divine,  
 We, though much fewer, their assault sustain.  
 But when toward loosing of the plough did wane  
 The slanting sun, then the Ciconian host  
 Turned us to flight along the shadowy plain.  
 Six of our comrades from each ship were lost,  
 But we the rest fled safely from the Thracian coast.

Then on our course we sail, distressed in heart,  
 Glad of our lives, yet grieving for the dead;  
 Natheless we list not from that shore depart,  
 Ere thrice with cries we hailed each fallen head  
 Of those whose blood the fierce Ciconians shed  
 In the wide plain. Ere yet we ceased to weep,  
 Zeus on our fleet the rage of Boreas dread  
 Launched, and with black clouds veiled the earth and deep,  
 While the dark Night came rushing from heaven's stormy steep.

Headlong the ships were driven with tattered sails.  
 These having furled we drave our keels ashore,  
 Fearing destruction from the raving gales.  
 Two nights and days we eating our heart's core  
 Lay till the third light beauteous Dawn upbore ;  
 Then we the masts plant, and the white sails spread,  
 And sitting lean to the laborious oar.  
 Wind and good pilotage the brave barks sped ;  
 Soon had I scatheless seen my native earth ahead,

But me the current and fell Boreas whirled,  
 Doubling Malea's cape, and far astray  
 Beyond the rude cliffs of Cythera hurled.  
 So for nine days along the watery way,  
 Teeming with monsters, me the winds affray  
 And with destruction ever seem to overwhelm :  
 But, on the afternoon of the tenth day,  
 We reached, borne downward with an easy helm,  
 Land of the flowery food, the Lotus-eating realm.

Anon we step forth on the dear mainland,  
 And draw fresh water from the springs, and there,  
 Seated at ease along the silent strand,  
 Not far from the swift ships our meal prepare.  
 Soon having tasted of the welcome fare,  
 I with the herald brave companions twain  
 Sent to explore what manner of men they were,  
 Who, on the green earth couched beside the main,  
 Seemed ever with sweet food their lips to entertain.

Who, when they came on the delightful place  
 Where those sat feeding by the barren wave,  
 There mingled with the Lotus-eating race ;  
 Who nought of ruin for our comrades brave  
 Dreamed in their minds, but of the Lotus gave ;  
 And whoso tasted of their flowery meat  
 Cared not with tidings to return, but clave  
 Fast to that tribe, for ever fain to eat,  
 Reckless of home-return, the tender Lotus sweet.

These sorely weeping by main strength we bore  
 Back to the hollow ships with all our speed,  
 And thrust them bound with cords upon the floor,  
 Under the benches : then the rest I lead  
 On board and bid them to the work give heed,  
 Lest others, eating of the Lotus, yearn  
 Always to linger in that land, and feed,  
 Careless for ever of the home-return :  
 Then, bending to their oars, the foamy deep they spurn.

Thence we sailed onward overwhelmed in heart,  
 And to the land of the Cyclopes came,  
 An undiscerning people, void of art  
 In life, and trampers on the sacred claim  
 Of laws which men for civil uses frame.  
 Scorners of common weal, no bounds they keep,  
 Nor learn with labors the rude earth to tame ;  
 Who neither plant nor plough nor sow nor reap ;  
 Still in the gods they trust, still careless wake and sleep.



There all good fruits on the spontaneous soil  
 Fed by the rain of Zeus for ever grow ;  
 Unsown, untended, corn and wine and oil  
 Spring to their hand ; but they no councils know  
 Nor justice, but for ever lawless go.  
 Housed in the hills, they neither buy nor sell,  
 No kindly offices demand or show ;  
 Each in the hollow cave where he doth dwell  
 Gives law to wife and children, as he thinketh well.



ODYSSEUS AND THE DRUNKEN CYCLOPS.  
 (From a Sarcophagus Relief.)

Skirting their harbor, neither near nor far,  
 A little island lies, with forest crowned,  
 Wherein wild goats in countless numbers are ;  
 Since there no track of mortal men is found  
 Who hunt in hardship over mountain ground,  
 And never plough hath pierced the woodland glen.  
 Unvisited it lies the whole year round.  
 None their tame flocks amid those pastures pen,  
 Feeding wild goats, and widowed of the race of men.

Not to Cyclopian brood doth appertain  
 Skill in the seas, or vermeil-painted fleet  
 Of barks, which, sailing o'er the azure main,  
 Pass and repass wherever seemeth meet,  
 And all the covenants of men complete ;  
 Nor have they shipwrights who might build them such ;  
 Else would they soon have colonized this seat.  
 Not worthless is it, but at human touch  
 Would take the seasons well, and yield exceeding much.

Fast by the margin of the hoary deep  
 Lie soft well-watered meadows. There the vine

Would bloom for ever. If to plough and reap,  
 Observant of the hours, one's heart incline,  
 Black with fertility, the soil doth shine.  
 Smooth is the haven, nor is need at all  
 Of anchor cable, and shore-fastened line.  
 Floating in shelter of that firm sea-wall  
 Sailors at will may wait till prosperous breezes call.

There a white waterfall beneath the cave  
 Springs forth, and flashes at the haven-head ;  
 Round it the whispering alders darkly wave.  
 Thitherward sailing through the night we sped,  
 Yea, some divinity the swift ships led  
 Through glooms not pierceable by power of eye.  
 Round us the deep night-air swung listless, dead ;  
 Nor moon nor stars looked down from the wide sky,  
 Hid by the gross cloud-curtain brooding heavily.

No mariner beheld the nearing strand,  
 Helmsman expert or wielder of the oar,  
 Nor marked the long waves rolling on the land.  
 Still with a steady prow we onward bore  
 Till the keels grated on the shelving shore.  
 Then we the sails take down, and, past the line  
 Of ripple, landing from the waters hoar,  
 Along the margin of the deep recline,  
 And sound-asleep wait dreaming for the Dawn divine.

But when the rosy-fingered Dawn came on,  
 Child of the mist, we wondering rose apace  
 The beauteous island to explore anon.  
 And lo ! the Nymphs inhabiting the place  
 Stirred in our sight the creatures of the chase,  
 That so my comrades might have food to eat.  
 Straight to the ships for bows and spears we race,  
 And, parted in three bands, the thickets beat ;  
 Soon did the god vouchsafe large spoil exceeding sweet.

*Me* twelve ships followed, and for each we won  
 Nine goats ; but for myself I chose out ten.  
 Thus all day long, till falling of the sun,  
 We sat there feasting in the hollow glen ;  
 Cheerily I ween the red wine circled then ;  
 Since of the liquor there remained much more  
 Sealed safely in the ships ; for when our men  
 Sacked the Ciconian citadel, good store  
 Of wine in earthen vessels to our fleet they bore.

And on the land of the Cyclopes near  
 We looked, and saw their smoke, and heard their hum.  
 Also the bleatings of their flocks we hear,  
 Till the ambrosial Night made all things dumb.  
 But when the rosy-fingered Dawn was come,  
 I called my friends, and said : " Stay ye the rest,  
 While I go forward to explore with some,  
 Mine own ship's crew, what folk this shore infest,  
 Despiteful, wild, unjust, or of a gentle breast."

Forthwith I march on board, and bid my crew  
 With me their captain the tall bark ascend,  
 And the stern-cables vigorously undo.  
 They to their several tasks with zeal attend ;  
 Then, sitting, to the oars' long sweep they bend,  
 And smite in unison the billows hoar.  
 Right quickly to the continent we wend ;  
 And lo ! a huge deep cave our eyes before,  
 Shaded about with laurels, very near the shore.

And all around the flocks and herds recline,  
 Parked by a rough-hewn fence of mountain stone,  
 All overhung with oak and tow'ry pine.  
 There dwelt the monstrous keeper all alone,  
 Who in his breast no kindred ties did own,  
 But, far apart, ungodly ways pursued ;  
 Sight not resembling human flesh and bone,  
 But like a mountain-column, crowned with wood,  
 Reigning above the hills in awful solitude.

Then of my comrades I the rest command  
 To guard the well-benched ship, remaining there,  
 But I the while with my twelve bravest land,  
 And of dark wine an ample goatskin bear,  
 Which Maron, venerable priest and seer  
 Of lord Apollo, the divine defence  
 Of Ismarus, because we held him dear,  
 Son of Euanthes, gave us to take thence,  
 Whom with his wife and child we saved in reverence.

Deep-foliaged grove his dwelling doth enfold,  
 Phœbus Apollo's, who there keeps his shrine.  
 Rich gifts he gave me—talents seven of gold  
 Which curiously was wrought and well did shine,  
 And bowl of silver, and twelve jars of wine,  
 Which in his halls lay hidden out of view,  
 Mellow with age, unmingled, sweet, divine ;  
 Known but to him the priest and other two,  
 His wife and chief house-dame, of all his retinue.

When they the red wine drank, he filled one cup,  
 Which when in twenty measures he did pour  
 Of water, and the scent divine rose up,  
 'Twere hard to hold one's cravings any more.  
 Thereof a goatskin filled I with me bore,  
 And in a wallet did provision crowd,  
 For my brave heart at once foreboded sore,  
 How I a man should meet, un pitying, proud,  
 Lawless and void of right, with giant strength endowed.

Soon to the cave we came, nor him there found,  
 Who 'mid the pastures with his flocks did stay.  
 We then the crates admire with cheeses crowned,  
 And the pens, packed with kids and lambs, survey  
 Where in his place each kind distinguished lay.  
 Here rest the firstlings, there the middle-born,  
 And further on the yearlings. Brimmed with whey  
 Pails, ranged in ordered rank, the walls adorn —  
 Wherein his flocks he wont to milk at eve and morn.



With strong persuasion me my friends besought  
To steal some cheeses, and return with haste  
To the swift ship, and thither having brought  
Both kids and fat lambs, from their pens displaced,  
Sailing to vanish o'er the watery waste.  
I to our loss would not persuaded be,  
Wishing to see him and his cheer to taste,  
If chance he lend me hospitality —  
Alas ! to my poor friends no welcome host proved he !

We then for holy offerings kindle flame,  
Eat of the cheeses, and till eventide  
Wait. Then with flocks and herds the Cyclops came  
Bearing a mighty pile of pine wood dried,  
Wherewith his evening meal might be supplied.  
Down with a crash he cast it in the cave ;  
We to the deep recess ran terrified.  
Anon his flocks within the walls he drave,  
But to the males a place without the courtyard gave.

Forthwith a rock stupendous with his hands  
He lifted, and athwart the entrance flung.  
Firm-rooted o'er the cave's deep mouth it stands.  
Not two-and-twenty wagons, four-wheeled, strong,  
Ever could move the mighty bulk along.  
Then sat he down and milked each teeming ewe  
And she-goat, and anon their eager young  
Under the dams disposed in order due ;  
And all the while thick bleatings rang the wide cave through.

Half the white milk he curdled, and laid up  
On crates of woven wicker-work with care ;  
And half he set aside in bowl and cup  
To stand in readiness for use, when'er  
Thirst should invite, and for his evening fare.  
Thus he his tasks right busily essayed,  
And at the last a red flame kindled there ;  
And, while the firelight o'er the cavern played,  
Us crouching he espied, and speedy question made.

“ Strangers, who are ye ? from what strand unknown  
Sail ye the watery ways ? After some star  
Of purpose, or on random courses blown  
Range ye like pirates, whom no perils bar,  
Who risk their own lives other men to mar ? ”  
So made he question, and our dear heart brake,  
Scared at the dread voice searching near and far,  
The rough rude accent, and the monstrous make,  
Natheless, though sore cast down, I thus responding spake :

“ We sons of Argos, while from Troy we keep  
Straight homeward, driven by many storms astray,  
Over the wide abysses of the deep,  
Chance on another course, a different way.  
Haply such doom upon us Zeus doth lay.  
Also of Agamemnon, Atreus' son,  
Soldiers we are, and his command obey  
Whose name rings loudest underneath the sun,  
City so vast he sacked, such people hath undone.

"So in our wanderings to thy knees we come  
 If thou the boon of hospitality  
 Wouldst furnish to our wants, or render some  
 Of those sweet offices which none deny  
 To strangers. Thou at least the gods on high  
 Respect, most noble one! for theirs are we,  
 Who now poor suppliants on thy help rely;  
 Chiefly revere our guardian Zeus, for he  
 Avenger of all such is ever wont to be!"

So did I speak: he ruthlessly replied:  
 "O fool, or new from some outlandish place,  
 Who by the fear of gods hast me defied!  
 What then is Zeus to the Cyclopien race,  
 Matched with whose strength the blessed gods are base?  
 Save that I choose to spare your heads, I trow  
 Zeus will not much avail you in this case.  
 But tell me where your good ship ye bestow,  
 At the land's end or near, that I the truth may know."

Thus spake he, urging trial of our state,  
 Nor caught me, in the experience manifold  
 Well versed. With crafty words I answered straight:  
 "Mighty Poseidon, who the earth doth hold,  
 Near the far limits which your land enfold,  
 On the sharp rocks our vessel did impel.  
 Thither a great wind from the deep us rolled.  
 I with these comrades from the yawning hell  
 Of waters have alone escaped, the tale to tell."

He nought replied, but of my comrades twain  
 Seized, and like dog-whelps on the cavern-floor  
 Dashed them: the wet ground steamed with blood and brain.  
 Straight in his ravin limb from limb he tore  
 Fierce as a lion, and left nothing o'er;  
 Flesh, entrails, marrowy bones of men just killed.  
 Gorging. To Zeus our hands, bemoaning sore,  
 We raised in horror, while his maw he filled,  
 And human meat devoured, and milk in rivers swilled.

After his meal he lay down with the sheep.  
 I, at the first, was minded to go near  
 And in his liver slake my drawn sword deep;  
 But soon another mind made me forbear;  
 For so should we have gained destruction sheer,  
 Since never from the doorway could we move  
 With all our strength the stones which he set there.  
 We all night long with groans our anguish prove,  
 Till rosy-fingered Dawn shone forth in heaven above.

At dawn a fire he kindled in the cave,  
 And milked the famous flocks in order due,  
 And to each mother her young suckling gave.  
 But when the morning tasks were all gone through,  
 He, of my wretched comrades seizing two,  
 Gorged breakfast as became his savage taste,  
 And with the fat flocks from the cave withdrew.  
 Moved he the stone, and set it back with haste,  
 Lightly as on some quiver he the lid replaced;

Then toward the mountain turned with noise ; but I  
Sat brooding on revenge, and made my prayer  
To Pallas, and resolved this scheme to try :  
For a huge club beside the sheepfold there,  
Green olive-wood, lay drying in his lair,  
Cut for a staff to serve him out of doors,  
Which we admiring to the mast compare  
Of some wide merchantman with twenty oars,  
Which the divine abysses of the deep explores.

Therefrom I severed as it were an ell,  
And bade my comrades make it smooth and round.  
Then to a tapering spire I shaped it well,  
And the green timber in the flame embrowned  
For hardness ; and, where dung did most abound,  
Deep in the cave the pointed stake concealed.  
Anon my comrades cast their lots all round,  
Which should with me the fiery weapon wield,  
And twirl it in his eye while sleep his huge strength sealed.

Then were four chosen — even the very same  
Whom I myself should have picked out to be  
My comrades in the work — and me they name  
The fifth, their captain. In the evening he  
Came, shepherding his flocks in due degree,  
Home from the hills, and all his fleecy rout  
Into the wide cave urged imperiously,  
Nor left one loiterer in the space without,  
Whether from God so minded, or his own dark doubt.

Soon with the great stone he blocked up the cave,  
And milked the bleating flocks in order due,  
And to each mother her young suckling gave.  
But when the evening tasks were all gone through,  
He of my wretched comrades seizing two  
Straight on the horrible repast did sup.  
Then I myself near to the Cyclops drew,  
And, holding in my hands an ivy cup  
Brimmed with the dark-red wine, took courage and spake up :

“ Cyclops, take wine, and drink after thy meal  
Consumed, of human flesh, that thou mayest know  
The kind of liquor wherein we sailors deal.  
This a drink-offering have I brought, that so  
Thou mightest pity me and let me go  
Safe homeward. Thou alas ! with fury extreme  
Art raving, and thy fierceness doth outgrow  
All bounds of reason. How then dost thou dream  
Others will seek thy place, who dost so ruthless seem ? ”

He then received and drank and loudly cried  
Rejoicing : “ Give me, give me more, and tell  
Thy name, that some good boon I may provide.  
True, the rich earth where the Cyclopes dwell,  
Fed by the rain of Zeus, in wine doth well,—  
But this is nectar, pure ambrosia's soul.”  
So spake he. Thrice I gave the fatal spell ;  
Thrice in his foolishness he quaffed the whole.  
Then said I, while his brain with the curling fumes did roll :



"Cyclops, thou askest me my name renowned —  
 Now will I make it known ; nor thou withhold  
 That boon whereto thy solemn troth is bound —  
 Hear then ; my name is Noman. From of old  
 My father, mother, these my comrades bold,  
 Give me this title." So I spake, and he  
 Answered at once with mind of ruthless mould :  
 "This shall fit largess unto Noman be —  
 Last, after all thy peers, I promise to eat thee."

Therewith his head fell and he lay supine,  
 Tamed by the stroke of all-subduing sleep ;  
 And the vast neck heaved, while rejected wine  
 And morsels of men's flesh in spasms did leap  
 Forth from his throat. Then did I rise, and deep  
 In the live embers hid the pointed stake,  
 Urging my comrades a good heart to keep.  
 Soon the green olive-wood the fire did bake  
 Then all a-glow with sparkles I the red brand take.

Round me my comrades wait. The gods inbreathe  
 Fierce ardour. In his eye we thrust the brand,  
 I twirling from above and they beneath.  
 As when a shipwright at his work doth stand  
 Boring ship-timber, and on either hand  
 His fellows, kneeling at their toil below,  
 Whirl the swift auger with a leathern band  
 For ever ; — we the weapon keep whirling so,  
 While round the fiery point red blood doth bubbling flow.

And from the burning eyeball the fierce steam  
 Singed all his brows, and the deep roots of sight  
 Crackled with fire. As when in the cold stream  
 Some smith the axe untempered, fiery-white,  
 Dips hissing ; for thence comes the iron's might,  
 So did his eye hiss, and he roared again.  
 Loudly the vault rebellowed. We in flight  
 Rushed diverse. He the stake wrenched forth amain,  
 Soaked in the crimson gore, and hurled it mad with pain ;

Then, bursting forth into a mighty yell,  
 Called the Cyclopes, who in cave and lair  
 'Mid the deep glen and windy hill-tops dwell.  
 They, trooping to the shriek from far and near,  
 Ask from without what ails him : " In what fear  
 Or trouble, Polyphemus, dost thou cry  
 Through night ambrosial, and our slumbers scare ?  
 Thee of thy flocks doth mortal violently  
 Despoil, or strive to kill by strength or treachery ? "

And frenzied Polyphemus from the cave  
 This answer in his pain with shrieks out-threw :  
 " Never by strength, my friends, or courage brave !  
 Noman by treachery doth me subdue."  
 Whereto his fellows wingèd words renew :  
 " Good sooth ! if no man work thee injury,  
 But in thy lone resort this sickness grew,  
 The hand of Zeus is not to be put by —  
 Go, then, in filial prayer to king Poseidon cry."

So they retiring; and I laughed in heart,  
To find the shrewd illusion working well.  
But the dread Cyclops over every part  
Groped eyeless with wild hands in anguish fell,  
Rolled back the massive mouthstone from the cell,  
And in the door sat waving everywhere  
His lightless arms, to capture or repel  
Any forth venturing with his flocks to fare —  
Dreaming to deal with one of all good prudence bare.

Seeking deliverance 'mid these dangers rife,  
So deadly-near the mighty evil pressed,  
All thoughts I weave as one that weaves for life,  
All kinds of scheming in my spirit test;  
And this of various counsels seemed the best.  
Fat rams there were, with goodly fleeces dight  
Of violet-tinted wool. These breast to breast  
I silent link of osiers twisted tight,  
Whereon the ill-minded Cyclops used to sleep at night.

By threes I linked them, and each middle one  
Carried a man : one walked on either side :  
Such was our plan the monster's rage to shun ;  
And thus three rams for each man we provide.  
But I, choosing a beast than all beside  
Fairer, in length more large and strength of spine,  
Under his belly in the woolly hide  
Clinging with both hands resolutely recline;  
And thus, groaning in soul, we wait the Dawn divine.



ESCAPE OF ODYSSEUS BOUND TO THE RAM.  
(From a Vase Painting.)

But with the rosy-fingered Morn troop thence  
The fat rams toward their pastures eagerly,  
While bleat the un milked ewes with udders tense,  
Distressful. So their lord, while each went by,  
Feeling their backs with many a bitter sigh,  
Dreamed not that we clung bound beneath the breast.  
Last came the great ram, trailing heavily  
Me and his wool, with cumbrous weight oppressed.  
Him mighty Polyphemus handling thus addressed :

" Ah ! mine own fondling, why dost linger now  
 So late ?—far other wast thou known of old.  
 With lordly steps the flowery pastures thou  
 First ever seekest, and the waters cold,  
 First too at eve returnest to the fold,—  
 Now last of all — dost thou thy master's eye  
 Bewail, whose dear orb, when I sank controlled  
 With wine, this Noman vile with infamy,  
 Backed by his rascal crew, hath darkened treacherously ?

" Whom let not vaunt himself escaped this debt,  
 Nor think me quenched and poor and powerless ;  
 Vengeance may chance to overtake him yet.  
 O hadst thou mind like mine, and couldst address  
 Thy master, and the secret lair confess  
 Wherein my wrath he shuns, then should his brain  
 Dashed on the earth with hideous stamp impress  
 Pavement and wall, appeasing the fell pain  
 Which from this Noman-traitor nothing-worth I drain ! "

Thus spake he, and the great ram from his doors  
 Dismissed. A little eastward from the cave  
 Borne with the flock we passed, and left his floors  
 Blood-stained behind, escaping a dire grave.  
 First mine own bands I loosened, and then gave  
 My friends their freedom : but the slow fat sheep,  
 Lengthily winding, to the ships we drave.  
 Joy stirred within our comrades strong and deep,  
 Glad of our help from doom, though forced the slain to weep.

Natheless their lamentations I made cease,  
 And with bent brows gave signal not to wail ;  
 But with all haste the flock so fine of fleece  
 Bade them on shipboard set, and forward sail.  
 So they the canvas open to the gale  
 And with timed oarage smite the foamy mere.  
 Soon from such distance as the voice might hail  
 A landsman, and by shouting make him hear,  
 I to the Cyclops shrilled with scorn and cutting jeer :

" Cyclops, you thought to eat a poor man's friends  
 Here in your cavern by sheer brutal might.  
 Go to : rough vengeance on thy crime attends ;  
 Since, in thy soul not reverencing the right,  
 Thy guests thou hast devoured in foul despite,  
 Even on thine own hearth. Therefore Zeus at last  
 And all the gods thine evil deeds requite."  
 So did I blow wind on his anger's blast.  
 He a hill-peak tore off, and the huge fragment cast

Just o'er the blue-prowed ship. As the mass fell,  
 Heaved in a stormy tumult the great main,  
 Bearing us landward on the refluent swell.  
 I a long barge-pole seize and strive and strain  
 To work our vessel toward the deep again,  
 Still beckoning to my crew to ply the oar ;  
 Who stoop to the strong toil and pull right fain  
 To twice the former distance from the shore.  
 Then stood I forth to hail the Cyclops yet once more.



Me then my friends with dear dissuasions tire  
On all sides, one and other. "Desperate one!  
Why wilt thou to a wild man's wrath add fire?  
Hardly but now did we destruction shun,  
So nigh that hurling had our bark undone.  
Yea, let a movement of the mouth but show  
Where through the billows from his rage we run,  
And he with heads will strew the dark sea-flow,  
And break our timbered decks—so mightily doth he throw."

So spake they, but so speaking could not turn  
My breast large-hearted; and again I sent  
Accents of wrath, his inmost soul to burn:  
"Cyclops, if mortal man hereafter, bent  
To know the story of this strange event,  
Should of thy hideous blindness make demand,  
Asking whence came this dire disfigurement,  
Name thou Laertes-born Odysseus' hand,  
Waster of walls, who dwells in Ithaca's rough land."

Then did he groaning in these words reply:  
"Gods! the old oracles upon me break—  
That warning of the antique prophecy  
Which Telemus Eurymides once spake—  
Skilled seer, who on our hills did auguries take,  
And waxed in years amid Cyclopiæ race.  
Of all these things did he foreshadowings make,  
And well proclaimed my pitiable case,  
And how this lightless brow Odysseus should deface.

"But always I some great and beauteous man  
Expected, one in awful strength arrayed,  
So to assail me as the legend ran.  
Now one unworthy by unworthy aid  
Doth blind me helpless, and with wine waylaid,  
And al-to strengthless doth surpass the strong.  
But come, Odysseus, let respect be paid  
To thee my guest, and thou shalt sail ere long,  
By the Earth-shaker wafted, free from scathe and wrong.

"His child am I, my sire he boasts to be,  
Who if he will, none else of mortal seed  
Of the blest, can heal my wound." Thus he:  
But I made answer: "Now in very deed  
I would to heaven this right arm might succeed  
So surely in thy death, as I am sure  
That not Poseidon even, at thy need,  
Thee of thine eyelessness hath power to cure,  
Know well thy fatal hurt forever shall endure."

Then to the king Poseidon he made prayer,  
Lifting his heart up to the starry sky:  
"Hear now, great monarch of the raven hair;  
Holder of earth, Poseidon, hear my cry,  
If thou my father art indeed, and I  
Thy child! Or ever he the way fulfil,  
Make thou Laertes-born Odysseus die,  
Waster of walls! or should the high Fates will  
That friends and home he see, then lone and late and ill

"Let him return on board a foreign ship,  
 And in his house find evil!" Thus he prayed  
 With hand uplifted and indignant lip:  
 And the dark-haired one heeded what he said.  
 He then his hand upon a great stone laid,  
 Larger by far than that he hurled before,  
 And the huge mass in booming flight obeyed  
 The measureless impulse, and right onward bore,  
 There 'twixt the blue-prowed bark descending and the shore,

Just short of ruin; and the foaming wave  
 Whitened in boiling eddies where it fell,  
 And rolling toward the isle our vessel drove,  
 Tossed on the mane of that tumultuous swell.  
 There found we all our fleet defended well,  
 And comrades sorrow-laden on the sand,  
 Hoping if yet, past hope, the seas impel  
 Their long-lost friends to the forsaken strand —  
 Grated our keel ashore; we hurrying leap on land.

Straight from the hollow bark our prize we share,  
 That none might portionless come off. To me  
 The ram for my great guerdon then and there  
 My well-greaved comrades gave in courtesy;  
 Which I to Zeus, supreme in majesty,  
 Killed on the shore, and burned the thighs with fire:  
 But to mine offering little heed gave he;  
 Since deep within his heart the cloud-wrapt Sire  
 Against both friends and fleet sat musing deathful ire.

So till the sun fell did we drink and eat,  
 And all night long beside the billows lay  
 Till blushed the hills 'neath morning's rosy feet;  
 Then did I bid my friends, with break of day,  
 Loosen the hawsers, and each bark array;  
 Who take the benches and the whitening main  
 Cleave with the sounding oars, and sail away.  
 So from the isle we part, not void of pain,  
 Right glad of our own lives, but grieving for the slain.

The passage describing Eurycleia's recognition of Odysseus is thus translated by Messrs. Butcher and Lang: (Book XIX.)

Then wise Penelope answered him: "Ah! stranger, would that this word may be accomplished. Soon shouldst thou be aware of kindness and many a gift at my hands, so that whoso met with thee would call thee blessed. But on this wise my heart has a boding, and so shall it be. Neither shall Odysseus come home any more, nor shalt thou gain an escort hence, since there are not now such masters in the house as Odysseus was among men,—if ever such an one there was,—to welcome guests revered and speed them on their way. But do ye, my handmaids, wash this man's feet and lay a bed for him, mattress and mantles and shining blankets, that well and warmly he may come to the time of golden-throned Dawn. And very early in the morning bathe him and anoint him, that within the house beside Telemachus he may eat meat, sitting quietly in the hall. And it shall be the worse for any hurtful man of the wooers, that vexes the stranger, yea

he shall not henceforth profit himself here, for all his sore anger. For how shalt thou learn concerning me, stranger, whether indeed I excel all women in wit and thrifty device, if all unkempt and evil clad thou sittest at supper in my halls? Man's life is brief enough! And if any be a bad man and hard at heart, all men cry evil on him for the time to come, while yet he lives, and all men mock him when he is dead. But if any be a blameless man and blameless of heart, his guests noise abroad his fame among all men and many call him excellent."

Then Odysseus, rich in counsel, answered her and said: "O wife revered of Odysseus, son of Laertes, mantles verily and blankets are hateful to me, since first I left behind me the snowy hills of Crete, voyaging in the long-oared galley: nay I would lie as in time past I was used to rest through the sleepless nights. For full many a night I have lain on an unsightly bed, and awaited the bright-throned Dawn. And baths for the feet are no longer my delight, nor shall any women of those who are serving maidens in thy house touch my foot, unless there chance to be some old wife, true of heart, one that has borne as much trouble as myself; I would not grudge that such an one should touch my feet."

Then wise Penelope answered him: "Dear stranger, for there has been none ever so discreet as thou, nor dearer, of all the strangers from afar that have come to my house, so clearly thou speakest all things discreetly; I have such an ancient woman of an understanding heart, that diligently nursed the hapless man my lord, and cherished him and took him in her arms, in the hour when his mother bare him. She will wash thy feet, albeit she is weak with age. Up now, wise Eurycleia, and wash this man, who is of like age with thy master. Yea and perchance the feet and hands of Odysseus are even now such as his, for men quickly age in sorrow."

So she spake, and the old woman covered her face with her hands and shed warm tears, and spake a word of lamentation, saying:

"Ah! woe is me, child, for thy sake, all helpless that I am! Surely Zeus hated thee above all men, though thou hadst a god-fearing spirit! For never yet did any man burn so many fat pieces of the thigh and so many choice hecatombs to Zeus, whose joy is in the thunder, as thou didst give to him, with prayers that so thou mightest grow to a smooth old age and rear thy renowned son. But now from thee alone hath Zeus wholly cut off the day of thy returning. Haply at him too were the women like to mock among strangers afar, whensoever he came to the famous palace of any lord, even as here these shameless ones all mock at thee. To shun their insults and many taunts it is that thou sufferest them not to wash thy feet, but the daughter of Icarius, wise Penelope, hath bidden me that am right willing to this task. Wherefore I will wash thy feet, both for Penelope's sake and for thine own, for that my heart within me is moved with pity. And now mark the word that I shall speak. Many strangers travel-worn have ere now come hither, but I say that I have never seen any so like as thou art in fashion and voice and feet to Odysseus."

Then Odysseus, rich in counsel, answered her, saying: "Old wife, even so all men declare, that have beheld us twain, that we favor each other exceedingly, even as thou dost truly say."

Thereupon the crone took the shining cauldron which she used for the washing of feet, and poured in much cold water and next mingled therewith the warm. Now Odysseus sat aloof from the hearth, and of a sudden he turned his face to the darkness, for anon he had a misgiving of heart lest



when she handled him she might recognize the scar, and all should be revealed. Now she drew near her lord to wash him, and straightway she knew the wound, that the boar had driven with his white tusk long ago, when Odysseus went to Parnassus to see Autolycus, and the sons of Autolycus, his mother's noble father, who outdid all men in thievery and skill in swearing. This skill was the gift of the god himself, even Hermes, for that he burned to him the well pleasing sacrifice of the thighs of lambs and kids; wherefore Hermes abetted him gladly. Now Autolycus came to the rich land of Ithaca, and found his daughter's son a child new-born, and when he was making an end of supper, behold Eurycleia set the babe on his knees, and spake and hailed him: "Autolycus, find thou a name thyself to give thy child's own son; for lo! he is a child of many prayers."

Then Autolycus made answer and spake: "My daughter and my daughter's lord, give ye him whatsoever name I tell you. For behold I am come hither in great wrath against many men and women over the fruitful earth, wherefore let the child's name be 'a man of wrath,' Odysseus. But when the child reaches its full growth, and comes to the great house of his mother's kin at Parnassus, whereby are my possessions, I will give him a gift out of these and send him on his way rejoicing."

Therefore it was that Odysseus went to receive the splendid gifts. And Autolycus and the sons of Autolycus grasped his hands and greeted him with gentle words, and Amphithea, his mother's mother, cast her arms about him and kissed his face and his beautiful eyes. Then Autolycus called to his renowned sons to get ready the meal, and they hearkened to the call. So presently they led in a five-year-old bull, which they flayed and busily prepared, and cut up all the limbs and deftly chopped them small and pierced them with spits and roasted them cunningly, dividing the messes. So for that livelong day they feasted till the going down of the sun, and their souls lacked not aught of the equal banquet. But when the sun sank and darkness came on, then they laid them to rest and took the boon of sleep.

Now so soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, they all went forth to the chase, the hounds and the sons of Autolycus, and with them went the goodly Odysseus. So they fared up the steep hill of wood-clad Parnassus, and quickly they came to the windy hollows. Now the sun was but just striking on the fields, and was come forth from the soft flowing stream of deep Oceanus. Then the beaters reached a glade of the woodland, and before them the hounds ran tracking a scent, but behind them came the sons of Autolycus, and among them goodly Odysseus followed close on the hounds, swaying a long spear. Thereby in a thick lair was a great boar lying, and through the coppice the force of the wet winds blew never, neither did the bright sun light on it with his rays, nor could the rain pierce through, so thick it was, and of fallen leaves there was great plenty therein. Then the noise of the men's feet and the dogs' came upon the boar, as they pressed on in their hunting, and forth from his lair he sprang towards them with his back well bristled and fire shining in his eyes, and stood at bay before them all. Then Odysseus was the first to rush in, holding his spear aloft in his strong hand, most keen to smite; but the boar was too quick for him and struck him above the knee, ripping through much flesh with his tusk as he charged sideways, but he reached not to the bone of the man. But Odysseus smote at his right shoulder and hit it, so that the point of the bright spear went clean through, and the boar fell in the dust with a cry, and his life passed from him. Then the sons of Autolycus began to busy them with the carcase, and as for the wound of the noble godlike



EURYLEIA RECOGNIZES ODYSSEUS.  
(From an Early Chiosian Vase.)



Odysseus, they bound it up skilfully, and stayed the black blood with a song of healing, and straightway returned to the house of their dear father. Then Autolycus and the sons of Autolycus got him well healed of his wound, and gave him splendid gifts, and quickly sent him with all love to Ithaca, gladly speeding a glad guest. There his father and lady mother were glad of his returning, and asked him of all his adventures, and of his wound how he came by it, and duly he told them all, namely, how the boar gashed him with his white tusk in the chase, when he had gone to Parnassus with the sons of Autolycus.

Now the old woman took the scarred limb and passed her hands down it, and knew it by the touch and let the foot drop suddenly, so that the knee fell into the bath, and the vessel rang, being turned over on the other side, and that water was spilled on the ground. Then grief and joy came on her in one moment, and her eyes filled up with tears, and the voice of her utterance was stayed, and touching the chin of Odysseus she spake to him, saying :

“Yea, verily thou art Odysseus, my dear child, and I knew thee not before, till I had handled all the body of my lord.”

Therewithal she looked toward Penelope, as minded to make a sign that her husband was now home. But Penelope could not meet her eyes nor understand, for Athene had bent her thoughts to other things. But Odysseus feeling for the old woman's throat seized it with his right hand and with the other drew her closer to him and spake, saying :

“Woman, why wouldst thou indeed destroy me? It was thou that didst nurse me there at thine own breast, and now after travail and much pain I am come here in the twentieth year to mine own country. But since thou art ware of me, and the god has put this in thy heart, be silent lest another learn the matter in the halls. For on this wise I will declare it, and it shall surely be accomplished : If the gods subdue the lordly wooers unto me, I will not hold my hand from thee, my nurse though thou art, when I slay the other handmaids in my halls.” Then wise Eurycleia answered, saying : “My child, what word hath escaped the door of thy lips! Thou knowest how firm is my spirit and unyielding, and I will keep me close as hard stone or iron. Yet another thing will I tell thee, and do thou ponder it in thine heart. If the gods subdue the lordly wooers to thy hand, then will I tell thee all the tale of the women in the halls, which of them dishonour thee and which be guiltless.”

Then Odysseus, rich in counsel, answered her saying : “Nurse, wherefore I pray thee wilt thou speak of these? Thou needest not, for even I myself will mark them and take knowledge of each. Nay, do thou keep thy saying to thyself, and leave the rest to the gods.” Even so he spake, and the old woman passed forth from the hall to bring water for his feet, for that first water was all spilled. So when she had washed him and anointed him well with olive oil, Odysseus again drew up his settle nearer to the fire to warm himself, and covered up the scar with his rags.

There is another beautiful passage describing the dog's welcome to his master, in the seventeenth book :

Thus they spake one to the other. And lo ! a hound raised up his head from where he lay and pricked his ears, Argos, the hound of the enduring Odysseus, which of old himself had bred, but had got no joy of him, for ere that, he went to sacred Ilios. Now in time past the young men used to lead the dog against wild goats and deer and hares ; but now was his master



gone, and he lay cast out in the deep dung of mules and kine, whereof he found great plenty spread before the doors, till the thralls of Odysseus should carry it away to dung therewith his wide demesne. There lay the dog Argos, full of vermin. Yet even now when he saw Odysseus standing by, he wagged his tail and dropped both his ears, but nearer to his master he had not the strength to draw. But Odysseus looked aside and wiped away a tear that he easily hid from Eumaeus, and straightway he asked him, saying :

"Eumaeus, verily this is a great marvel, this hound lying here in the dung. Truly he is goodly of limb, but I know not certainly if he have speed with his beauty, or if he be comely only as are men's trencher dogs that their lords keep for the pleasure of the eye."

Then didst thou make answer, swineherd Eumaeus : "In very truth this is the dog of a man that has died in a far land. If he were what once he was in limb and in the feats of the chase, when Odysseus left him to go to Troy, thou wouldst marvel at the sight of his swiftness and his strength. There was no monster that could flee from him in the deep places of the wood, when he was in pursuit ; for even on a track he was the keenest hound. But now he is holden in an evil case, and his lord has perished far from his own country, and the careless women take no charge of him. Nay, thralls are no more inclined to honest service when their masters have lost the dominion, for Zeus, of the far-borne voice, takes away the half of a man's virtue when the day of slavery comes upon him."

Therewith he passed within the fair-lying house, and went straight to the hall, to the company of the proud wooers. But upon Argos came the fate of black death, even in the hour that he beheld Odysseus again, in the twentieth year.



ARGOS RECOGNIZES IN THE BEGGAR, HIS MASTER ODYSSEUS.

## CHAPTER IV.—THE EPICS IN GENERAL, AND THE HOMERIC HYMNS.

- I.—Extravagance of Some of the Praise given to Homer by Over-enthusiastic Admirers—Some of the Points of Resemblance and Difference between the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, as in the relation of Gods to Men, etc. ; The Different Kinds of Similes in the Two Poems ; of Epithets—The Moral Law as it is Implied and Stated. II.—The Other Compositions Ascribed to Homer ; Hymns, Parodies and Minor Poems—The Light that the Hymns throw on Early Religious Thought—The Myths not invented as Stories, but Attempted Explanations of the Universe—The Mock-Homeric Poems. III.—Illustrative Extracts. IV.—The Later Epics : their Subjects ; their Relation to the Homeric Poems ; and their Merit.

### I.

NATURALLY enough, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* have been the object of much indiscriminate praise, and the reverence that is their due has at times inspired a form of laudation which is scarcely to be distinguished from enthusiastic worship, and admiration for the beauty of the poems has blinded rapturous adorers to the exact significance of some of the extravagant pæans. One of the commonest as well as one of the least warranted of these extravagant utterances is this, that Homer drew a perfectly happy period. Thus Mr. Frederic Harrison says : " In Homer alone of the poets a national life is transfigured, wholly beautiful, complete, and happy ; where care, doubt, decay, are as yet unborn." Fortunately for his fame, however, Homer did not conceive of the world as a place devoid of care and decay, and although this statement as the author made it is really only a dithyrambic expression of admiration and nothing more, we often find a similar incongruity between the text of Homer and the canticles of those who perhaps are readier to praise than to read him. This author goes on to say that the imitative writers of epics draw imaginary pictures of flawless bliss out of their own imagination, but Homer " paints a world which he saw," as if he saw a world without care, doubt and decay. In other words, Mr. Harrison accepts the mythical story that Homer was blind.

Yet, in fact, this is an excellent specimen of the error that has inspired Homer's would-be rivals to describe a faultless ideal world. He did, to be sure, paint the world he saw, and they have tried to outdo him by painting worlds that no one has ever seen, which should exceed his by their freedom from faults, but with the result that he

survives, while they linger as men adorned with merely literary charm. The world that he beheld was one full of grief, disappointment, treachery, and the immortal charm of his portrayal lies in his recognition and expression of this truth. Was there no care in Troy, or in the Grecian camp? None in Penelope's heart as she waited for Odysseus? None in Odysseus as he made his weary way homeward? Was there no doubt among the stalwart warriors that fought the immortal fight about Ilium? No decay? These questions are curiously answered if Mr. Harrison's statements are affirmed. When Homer mourned that men had dwindled so that in these degenerate days they could not lift the weight which the heroes swung without an effort; when he described Priam's anguish at pleading with Achilles, or Penelope's faithful watch for her husband, it was no fantastic world he described; we are all ready enough to decry the imagined inferiority of the present; and as for the other and more serious matters, it seems scarcely worth while to say that it is Homer's perception of the world that makes him great; all the intervention of the gods and the impossible machinery can not mar the vividness of his perception of human emotions, and these emotions are made up of care, doubt, and decay.

The error of this indiscriminate enthusiasm is easy to comprehend. We all place the Golden Age in the past, and associate with the chronicles of a vague early period the general inexactitude of our impressions; but Homer either saw something like what he sang, or, as is more likely, lived when its harsh outlines were a little misty, and so readily lent it its air of cloudland; yet he was not so remote from his object as to forego the very life of poetry, which is truth. An impossible land of faultless happiness would have faded like a dream. Homer is immortal because he wrings our heart with agony, despair, and doubt. He does not call upon us to sympathize with angels; if he had done so, angels would have been his only readers.

The main resemblance between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is this: that the two, beside holding altogether the highest position in epic poetry, evidently belong to very nearly the same period. They both treat of the myths concerning the Trojan war, but as to the manner of treatment countless differences arise as soon as they are at all carefully examined. In ancient times, as indeed is still the case, the two poems were ascribed to the one poet, Homer, but there were many who found the points of difference too great for the acceptance of that hypothesis. Some explained this diversity on the theory that Homer wrote the *Iliad* in his youth or early maturity, and the *Odyssey* in his old age, a proposition which no longer commends itself to scholars. Yet the explanation, though unacceptable, points out very



clearly the difference between the two poems. No one can read them without being convinced that the *Odyssey* is the later poem; the whole tone is that of a riper civilization. The gods still interfere in human actions, but Olympus is no longer distracted by their quarrels; the hero is not a tool of the gods, but a dependent being, who is, so to speak, their favorite, but not their tool. In the *Odyssey*, too, we observe a change in the growth of respect for oracles and in the maturer reflection that frequently finds expression. There are, moreover, what we may call technical differences, such as the extension of the use of the word *Hellas* for the main division of Greece exclusive of the Peloponnesus, instead of limiting it to the Thessalian home of the Myrmidons, as is the case in the *Iliad*, and in the prominence given in the *Odyssey* to *Hermes*, who takes the place assigned in the other poem to *Iris*.

All of these arguments concern scholars rather than readers, who will demand no stronger proof than their own feelings, and especially is this true of that convenient figment of the imagination, the general reader who always thinks what the writer tells him to think. The likeness between the two poems is probably part of their common possession of the qualities of the period in which they were composed. In both, the vivid and direct representation of nature is a striking merit. Homer, first and almost alone, has seen nature, while most of his successors have seen it with eyes dimmed by the reading of books. It is in the comparisons that Homer has spoken most impressively. Some of these are of the utmost simplicity: "As beautiful as an immortal;" "he fell like a tower in the raging battle;" "they fought like blazing fire;" "they were as numberless as the sands on the sea-shore or the leaves in the forest," etc., etc. Others again are fuller and more complicated; they consist not of the single image that strikes the eye, but of a series, or of several distinct parts of one image that are combined to throw light on some human action or feeling. The *Iliad* is especially rich in comparisons of this kind; many of them are taken from hunting adventures; others from various familiar scenes and occupations. Thus the many accounts of battles are saved from monotony by the numerous vivid similes: thus, Paris shrinks back like the traveler before the snake; Apollo overthrows the wall as a boy knocks down a sand fort; one hero slips behind the protecting shield of Ajax, like a child behind his mother; Achilles, when he sees Priam in his tent, stares at him as strangers stare at a fugitive murderer; Ajax gives ground before the Trojan like the ass retreating before boys with sticks, etc., etc.

In the *Odyssey* we find similes of a more refined sort: Penelope's tears at hearing the recital of her husband's woes are like melting

snow, and when the two meet, they embrace like shipwrecked persons who have escaped death; and when Odysseus reaches the land of the Phæacians, "as when children are watching the precious life of a father, who lies sick, in pain, slowly fading away—for some baneful power attacks him—and the gods free from peril the man who is thus loved; so precious appeared to Odysseus the land and the trees." One sees the advance from direct vision to reflection in comparing the similes of the *Odyssey* with those of the *Iliad*. Homer's use of epithets also attracts the reader's attention; almost every noun has its descriptive adjective; the sea is continually wide; the sword, sharp; the lance, long; these are the simplest epithets. The yoke-carrying steers, the never-resting sun, the silver-buckled sword, indicate more careful thought. The abundance of epithets that marks the poems is but one of many indications of the tireless ingenuity of the Greeks and of the many-sidedness of their minds. The same keen love of clearness that enriched their syntax is seen here in the simpler enumeration of the various sides of different objects; the profusion of qualities that caught their attention proves the susceptibility of their perceptions, while the avoidance of mere mechanical repetition and the agreeable variety bear witness to the sensitiveness of their taste. The astounding brilliancy of the Greeks is here, as it were, in the bud, and we find it fascinated by the spectacle of the world in its newness, before literature had left its trail of associations over the whole face of nature.

The moral world was known, however, more fully than the physical world, and the ancients drew from the Homeric poems profound moral instruction. They perceived the praise given to love of home, of family, to bravery and persistence, and drew from it courage and inspiration. Every accurate portrait of an individual abounds with moral lessons, because no man lives who is not in some ethical relation with his kind at every step. Every act of his concerns his neighbor as truly as it concerns himself; his inaction is equally far-reaching, and no portrait can be drawn of him that shall not be full of moral teaching, however little this may be intended by the author. It is as impossible to escape this eternal necessity as it is to paint with the brush or to describe with the pen a man not in relation with the physical laws of the universe. In both tasks the final test is the truth with which the work is done, and the impressiveness of the lesson depends far more on the way in which the characters and incidents are represented than on the energy with which the moral is urged. No book, for instance, is so full of profitable instruction as is life itself, yet the lessons of experience are not directly didactic, and the literature that avoids the inculcation of moral lessons has more influence than that



which rests on the supposition that teaching is necessary. It is the same error that is made by writers who seem to think that by endowing their characters with more than human qualities and by accumulating impossible incidents, they will surely attain impressiveness. But, after all, what is more impressive, more solemn, as well as more instructive than life?

Homer, or what is the same thing, the early Greeks, can not be convicted of such a mistake. The same objection to impossibilities that characterized their religious feelings and kept their ideas of their gods within what we may call finite limits, also found expression in their art and literature. Formlessness and lack of bounds had no charm for them, indeed such qualities were something they could not conceive, or at least contemplate with any thing like satisfaction. Homer eschewed exaggeration and impossibility; here at least he is thoroughly secure from attack. The wealth of the material that he employed is less surprising than his unfailing artistic sense which knew only what was true. In both respects Shakspeare is his only rival in the literature of the whole world. Nowhere else do we find the thorough and sympathetic comprehension of the human heart that marks these two great poets. Homer tells his story by representing the determining causes within the minds of men, by disclosing the secret springs within the hearts of his characters. And since he does this with unequaled psychological knowledge, the rivalry of those successors who have accumulated external incidents without real analysis leaves him untouched. What might be hastily judged to be a tale of slaughter is a deep study of human passions; the adventures of Odysseus become in Homer's hands profound pictures of the many-sidedness of human life: he teaches great lessons without preaching, and the lessons, too, that every generation has to learn anew for itself. This quality is what gives him his eternal value.

It is a value, it must also be remembered, that is very different from the quality of childishness that is sometimes ascribed to Homer. Because we find a frequent repetition of conventional epithets after a fashion that seems to betoken simplicity, it is affirmed that we have in him the poet of an infantile period. But the remark is perhaps misleading, for the very conventionality of the epithets indicates an antiquity of petrifying custom, and is further contradicted by the ripeness of reflection and observation to be met with on every page. The ethical ripeness of the poems is in no way childlike; the conditions of the civilization are those of comparative immaturity in contrast with the later growth of Greece and of modern times, but they indicate a long and important past, in which the great facts of life have appeared as solemn and important as they do now. If Homer were merely child-



like, he would be read only in the nursery; and while many of the circumstances that he describes find in the young their heartiest admirers, his wisdom delights all, and it is a wisdom derived only from experience. The effort to attain it by artifice has never yet succeeded, any more than has the attempt to draw ideal scenes that shall be greater than those he knew. Yet, as we saw, his truthfulness once seemed ideal to his imitators as it now does to some of his admirers.

## II.—THE HOMERIC HYMNS.

Besides the two great epics that are ascribed to Homer, there are other much shorter poems which bear his name, being attached to it probably by the same attraction that ascribes all sorts of old and new jests to prominent wits. These consist of a collection of hymns and of a few shorter poems which have survived the destruction that has fallen on a number that were known to antiquity. It is a mere form to call any of these poems Homer's, even on the supposition that a man of that name wrote both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* or either of them; they belong to different writers and are of very unequal merit. Their age is uncertain, but it is evident that they belong to a later period than the epics. The hymns are of the nature of introductory innovations composed for recitations at great meetings of the populace, when the bards sang in rivalry, or at the opening of religious feasts. They were not liturgical compositions, but rather expressions of the fortunate Hellenic combination of literature and religion. The gods are sung by the bard: Apollo, and Aphrodite at the greatest length, and more briefly Ares, Artemis, Athene, Here, Demeter, Hercules, Asklepios, the sons of Zeus, Castor and Polydeuces, Pan, Zeus, Hestia (the Latin Vesta), the Muses, Helios and Selene. Some of the short hymns are simply a brief address to the gods, with some description of the divinity, mention of his genealogy, or praise of his deeds and qualities. The longer ones, to Pan and Dionysos, are among the noteworthy ones, but the longest, to Apollo, Hermes, Aphrodite and Demeter, are the most important. The one to Apollo, in which scholars have detected the combination of two separate hymns, bears the mark of literary mannerism in the conduct of the various subjects of which it treats. The first part contains an account of the god's birth, and of the establishment of worship on the island of Delos; the other part, or, more properly, the other hymn, narrates Apollo's establishment of the Delphian sanctuary and oracle, a fact that gave it more credit than its literary merit deserves. The hymn to Hermes reads like any thing but a devotional utterance, and

the pranks of the mischievous young deity are recounted with an approving amusement that knows nothing of reverence. Nothing can be imagined further from the modern feeling than the apparent intimacy with the gods that fills these hymns. The simplicity of the



APOLLO-KALLINIKOS.  
(*Belvedere.*)

writer is far removed from ribaldry as we see it in the blasphemies of, for example, those French writers of the last century who turned the Bible to ridicule; it seems like sheer light-heartedness that inspires the poet. Indeed it is perfectly possible to suppose that it is a serious expression of religious feeling, if we remember the difference between the emotions that this subject produces in us moderns and those that

appeared at all times among the Greeks. With us these are full of a reverential awe which is in good measure the result of Semitic influences, while in the Greeks we continually observe a jocund companionship with their various deities, whose escapades are narrated with unwearying delight and amusement, with no consciousness of irreverence or disrespect. Obviously it is difficult to suppose that sheer love of scandal could have contributed to the formation of a mythology of this sort; it is fairer to suppose that these legends grew up in a state of society in which the occurrences did not arouse any other feeling than one of admiration for the craft or ability that they displayed; they thus prove that they grew into shape in a barbaric time, as the existence of a flint arrowhead proves that the metals were not commonly used at the time of its manufacture. In the cunning of Odysseus we see a survival of the admiration for an ingenious hero, just as some qualities of Achilles represent an early savageness—in neither case was there any desire to ridicule a hero—and the mythology is full of similar relics of the past. Hence it is possibly more than likely—if one may speak of the unknown with even such positiveness—that this hymn to Hermes is a fair representation of an immoral period when the pranks of a deity were legitimate objects of admiration, just as the coarser crimes which abound in the mythology carried with them in early days no imputation on the excellence of the gods, although later these incidents became a serious stumbling-block. They are in fact to be regarded as traces of the anthropomorphism of a savage period, when successive violence and brutality were admired qualities, and we should look at them not as fanciful inventions, but as crude attempts at a scientific explanation of the universe. What survives as romance existed as apparent fact, just as the bows and arrows with which early men slew their enemies and secured food are now the toys of children or idlers. Otherwise it is hard to see how the myths came into existence, especially when we reflect upon the difficulty of comprehending the invention of incidents discordant with current beliefs and feelings, and the universality of the survival in later times of old emotions and habits. The tender conservatism of religion especially preserves these memorials of antiquity, as is shown by the late usage of flint implements by Jews and Romans, by the robes of priests that make traditional and solemn the customary garb of the time when they were introduced, and the language and forms of the ritual. Indeed, a frivolous person might say that the present impressive attire of the Faculty of Harvard College upon days of ceremony is the only known instance of uninherited formality.

In the hymn to Aphrodite, which was written quite late, we find the story of Aphrodite's love for Anchises, to whom she bore Æneas,



told in a similar way, with as little modern religious feeling for the Greek divinities as we find in Hawthorne's "Wonder-Book." On the other hand, the hymn to Demeter is marked by a more serious tone. The subject, the rape of Persephone, indeed, required it, and the poet supplied it. The references to the Eleusinian mysteries lent solemnity to the serious cast of the poem.



APHRODITE AND ANCHISES.

Two mock-heroic poems were also ascribed to Homer; one of these, which Aristotle believed to be the work of that poet, was the *Margites*, an amusing treatment of a foolish "simple Simon," whose feats are said to have been very much like those recounted in the folk-lore of many nations. Unfortunately only six lines of the poem have come down to us. The *Batrachomyomachia*, or the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, enjoyed less reputation among the Greeks than among the Romans, who were ready to be pleased with any thing that came to them from the older literature. It is a parody of the epic compositions, and while parodies often thrive when the original flourishes, this statement is especially true of periods when any form of composi-

tion is the exclusive possession of a single class, and the Greek epic was the property of the whole people. Doubtless the poem was a parody of the attempts made in an uncongenial time to continue or to revive the outgrown epic. The artificial humour of the pompous names of the heroes, for instance, leaves the Homeric poems untouched. Yet the parody, unamusing as it is, has been frequently imitated in later times, and has done service to modern literature by justifying a certain amount of frivolity by means of an Homeric precedent. The handful of short poems that have been ascribed to the same writer belong to uncertain poets of an early period, who made use of the hexameter as the only possible form of poetical expression. The epic machinery controlled even the lyric verse. Thus the one called, "Cuma. Refusing his offer to eternize their state, though brought thither by the Muses" may easily be supposed to be the work of some later poet who had heard the old tradition.

## EXTRACTS FROM THE MINOR HOMERIC POEMS.

## III.

To what fate hath Father Jove given o'er  
 My friendless life, born ever to be poor!  
 While in my infant state he pleas'd to save me,  
 Milk on my reverend mother's knees he gave me,  
 In delicate and curious nursery;  
 Æolian Smyrna, seated near the sea,  
 (Of glorious empire, and whose bright sides  
 Sacred Meletus' silver current glides,)  
 Being native seat to me. Which, in the force  
 Of far-past time, the breakers of wild horse,  
 Phriconia's noble nation, girt with tow'rs;  
 Whose youth in fight put on with fiery pow'rs,  
 From hence, the Muse-maids, Jove's illustrious Seed,  
 Impelling me, I made impetuous speed,  
 And went with them to Cuma, with intent  
 T' eternize all the sacred continent  
 And state of Cuma. They, in proud ascent  
 From off their bench, refus'd with usage fierce  
 The sacred voice which I aver is verse.  
 Their follies, yet, and madness borne by me,  
 Shall by some pow'r be thought on futrely,  
 To wreak of him whoever, whose tongue sought  
 With false impair my fall. What fate God brought  
 Upon my birth I'll bear with any pain,  
 But undeserv'd defame unfelt sustain.  
 Nor feels my person (dear to me though poor)  
 Any great lust to linger any more  
 In Cuma's holy highways; but my mind  
 (No thought impair'd, for cares of any kind  
 Borne in my body) rather vows to try  
 The influence of any other sky,  
 And spirits of people bred in any land  
 Of ne'er so slender and obscure command.

## FROM THE BATRACHOMYOMACHIA.

Ent'ring the fields, first let my vows call on  
 The Muses' whole quire out of Helicon  
 Into my heart, for such a poem's sake,  
 As lately I did in my tables take,  
 And put into report upon my knees,  
 A fight so fierce as might in all degrees  
 Fit Mars himself and his tumultuous hand,  
 Glor'ing to dart to th' ears of every land  
 Of all the voice-divided; and to show  
 How bravely did both Frogs and Mice bestow  
 In glorious fight their forces, even the deeds  
 Daring to imitate of Earth's Giant Seeds.  
 Thus then men talk'd; this seed the strife begat:  
 The Mouse once dry, and 'scaped the dangerous cat,  
 Drench'd in the neighbour lake her tender beard,  
 To taste the sweetness of the wave it rear'd.  
 The far-famed Fen-affecter, seeing him, said:  
 "Ho, stranger! What are you, and whence, that tread  
 This shore of ours? Who brought you forth? Reply  
 What truth may witness, lest I find you lie.  
 If worth fruition of my love and me,  
 I'll have thee home, and hospitality  
 Of feast and gift, good and magnificent,  
 Bestow on thee; for all this confluent  
 Resounds my royalty; my name, the great  
 In blown-up count'nances and looks of threat,  
 Physignathus, adored of all Frogs here  
 All their days' durance, and the empire bear  
 Of all their beings; mine own being begot  
 By royal Peleus, mix'd in nuptial knot  
 With fair Hydromedusa, on the bounds  
 Near which Eridanus his race resounds.  
 And thee mine eye makes my conceit inclined  
 To reckon powerful both in form and mind,  
 A sceptre-bearer, and past others far  
 Advanc'd in all the fiery fights of war.  
 Come then, thy race to my renown commend."  
 The Mouse made answer: "Why inquires my friend?  
 For what so well know men and Deities,  
 And all the wing'd affecters of the skies?  
 Psicharpax I am call'd; Troxartes' seed,  
 Surnamed the Mighty-minded. She that freed  
 Mine eyes from darkness was Lichomyle,  
 King Pternotroctes' daughter, showing me,  
 Within an aged hovel, the young light,  
 Fed me with figs and nuts, and all the height  
 Of varied viands. But unfold the cause,  
 Why, 'gainst similitude's most equal laws  
 Observed in friendship, thou mak'st me thy friend?  
 Thy life the waters only help t' extend;  
 Mine, whatsoever men are used to eat,  
 Takes part with them at shore; their purest cheat,  
 Thrice boulded, kneaded, and subdued in paste,  
 In clean round kymnells, cannot be so fast  
 From my approaches kept but in I eat;  
 Nor cheesecakes full of finest Indian wheat,



That crusty-weeds wear, large as ladies' trains ;  
 Liverings, white-skin'd as ladies ; nor the strains  
 Of press'd milk, renneted ; nor collops cut  
 Fresh from the flitch ; nor junkets, such as put  
 Palates divine in appetite ; nor any  
 Of all men's delicates, though ne'er so many  
 Their cooks devise them, who each dish see deckt  
 With all the dainties all strange soils affect.  
 Yet am I not so sensual to fly  
 Of fields embattled the most fiery cry,  
 But rush out straight, and with the first in fight  
 Mix in adventure. No man with affright  
 Can daunt my forces, though his body be  
 Of never so immense a quantity,  
 But making up, even to his bed, access,  
 His fingers' ends dare with my teeth compress,  
 His feet taint likewise, and so soft seize both  
 They shall not taste th' impression of a tooth.  
 Sweet sleep shall hold his own in every eye  
 Where my tooth take his tartest liberty.  
 But two there are, that always, far and near,  
 Extremely still control my force with fear,  
 The Cat, and Night-hawk, who much scathe confer  
 On all the outways where for food I err.  
 Together with the straits-still-keeping trap,  
 Where lurks deceitful and set-spleen'd mishap.  
 But most of all the Cat constrains my fear,  
 Being ever apt t'assault me everywhere ;  
 For by that hole that hope says I shall 'scape,  
 At that hole ever she commits my rape.  
 The best is yet, I eat no pot-herb grass,  
 Nor radishes, nor coloquintidas,  
 Nor still-green beets, nor parsley : which you make  
 Your dainties still, that live upon the lake."  
 The Frog replied : " Stranger, your boasts creep all  
 Upon their bellies ; though to our lives fall  
 Much more miraculous meats by lake and land,  
 Jove tend'ring our lives with a twofold hand,  
 Enabling us to leap ashore for food,  
 And hide us straight in our retreatful flood.  
 Which, if you will serve, you may prove with ease.  
 I'll take you on my shoulders, which fast seize,  
 If safe arrival at my house y' intend."  
 He stoop'd, and thither spritely did ascend,  
 Clasp'ing his golden neck, that easy seat  
 Gave to his sally, who was jocund yet,  
 Seeing the safe harbours of the king so near,  
 And he a swimmer so exempt from peer.  
 But when he sunk into the purple wave,  
 He mourn'd extremely, and did much deprave  
 Unprofitable penitence ; his hair  
 Tore by the roots up, labour'd for the air  
 With his feet fetch'd up to his belly close ;  
 His heart within him panted out repose,  
 For th' insolent plight in which his state did stand ;  
 Sighed bitterly, and long'd to greet the land,  
 Forced by the dire need of his freezing fear.  
 First, on the waters he his tail did steer,  
 Like to a stern ; then drew it like an oar,  
 Still praying the gods to set him safe ashore ;

Yet sunk he midst the red waves more and more,  
 And laid a throat out to his utmost height,  
 Yet in forced speech he made his peril slight,  
 And thus his glory with his grievance strove :  
 " Not in such choice state was the charge of love  
 Borne by the bull, when to the Cretan shore  
 He swum Europa through the wavy roar,  
 As this Frog ferries me, his pallid breast  
 Bravely advancing, and his verdant crest  
 (Submitted to my seat) made my support,  
 Through his white waters, to his royal court."  
 But on the sudden did appearance make  
 An horrid spectacle,—a Water-snake  
 Thrusting his freckled neck above the lake.  
 Which seen to both, away Physignathus  
 Dived to his deeps, as no way conscious  
 Of whom he left to perish in his lake,  
 But shunn'd black fate himself, and let him take  
 The blackest of it ; who amidst the fen  
 Swum with his breast up, hands held up in vain,  
 Cried *Peepe*, and perish'd ; sunk the waters oft,  
 And often with his sprawlings came aloft,  
 Yet no way kept down death's relentless force,  
 But, full of water, made an heavy corse.  
 Before he perish'd yet, he threaten'd thus :  
 " Thou lurk'st not yet from Heaven, Physignathus,  
 Though yet thou hid'st here, that hast cast from thee,  
 As from a rock, the shipwrack'd life of me,  
 Though thou thyself no better was than I,  
 O worst of things, at any faculty,  
 Wrastling or race. But, for thy perfidy  
 In this my wrack, Jove bears a wreakful eye ;  
 And to the host of Mice thou pains shalt pay,  
 Past all evasion." This his life let say,  
 And left him to the waters.

\* \* \* \* \*

And first Hypsiboas Lichenor wounded,  
 Standing th' impression of the first in fight.  
 His lance did in his liver's midst alight,  
 Along his belly. Down he fell ; his face  
 His fall on that part sway'd, and all the grace  
 Of his soft hair fill'd with disgraceful dust.  
 Then Troglodytes his thick javelin thrust  
 In Pelion's bosom, bearing him to ground,  
 Whom sad death seized ; his soul flew through his wound.  
 Seutlaeus next Embasichytros slew,  
 His heart through-thrusting. Then Artophagus threw  
 His lance at Polyphon, and struck him quite  
 Through his mid-belly ; down he fell upright,  
 And from his fair limbs took his soul her flight.  
 Limnocharis, beholding Polyphon  
 Thus done to death, did, with as round a stone  
 As that the mill turns, Troglodytes wound,  
 Near his mid-neck, ere he his onset found ;  
 Whose eyes sad darkness seized. Lichenor cast  
 A flying dart off, and his aim so placed  
 Upon Limnocharis, that sure he thought  
 The wound he wish'd him ; nor untruly wrought  
 The dire success ; for through his liver flew

The fatal lance ; which when Crambophagus knew  
 Down the deep waves near shore he, diving, fled,  
 But fled not fate so ; the stern enemy fed  
 Death with his life in diving ; never more  
 The air he drew in ; his vermilion gore  
 Stain'd all the waters, and along the shore  
 He laid extended.

## IV.

While the genuineness of these minor poems was even in ancient times frequently doubted or denied, it was yet held that they were probably the work of the Homerides or successors of Homer. At present any absolute statement concerning their origin would be shunned by the prudent, except perhaps that they belong to a later age, a statement that does not err on the side of positiveness, because it is difficult to say just what the Homeric age was. As we shall soon see, they have for the most part but little in common with the poetry of Hesiod, and the same thing is true of what are called the cyclic poets, whose work has only come down to us in fragments ; indeed, only about sixty lines remain of all their epics.

It is apparent that any discussion of these epics is, to a great extent, work in the dark. At one time it was held that a number of poets banded together for the purpose of, as it were, engrossing the mythical history of Greece in a series of epics which should cover the whole ground without repetition, but this view, according to which epic poetry was catalogued before it was written, is now generally abandoned, for it has been discovered that the authors observed no such conditions as the arrangement implies, and men have become aware that in no conditions that can be conceived will poets agree to divide their work in this mechanical way. We may assume that even inferior epic poems are not written by the job. These epics were, first, the *Cypria*, which was at an early period ascribed to Homer, though this was subsequently denied. How the poem got this title is not clear ; it has been suggested that its author may have come from Cyprus or else that it sang mainly of Aphrodite, the Cyprian goddess. Whatever the reason may have been, the poem recounted a great many myths, and told the story

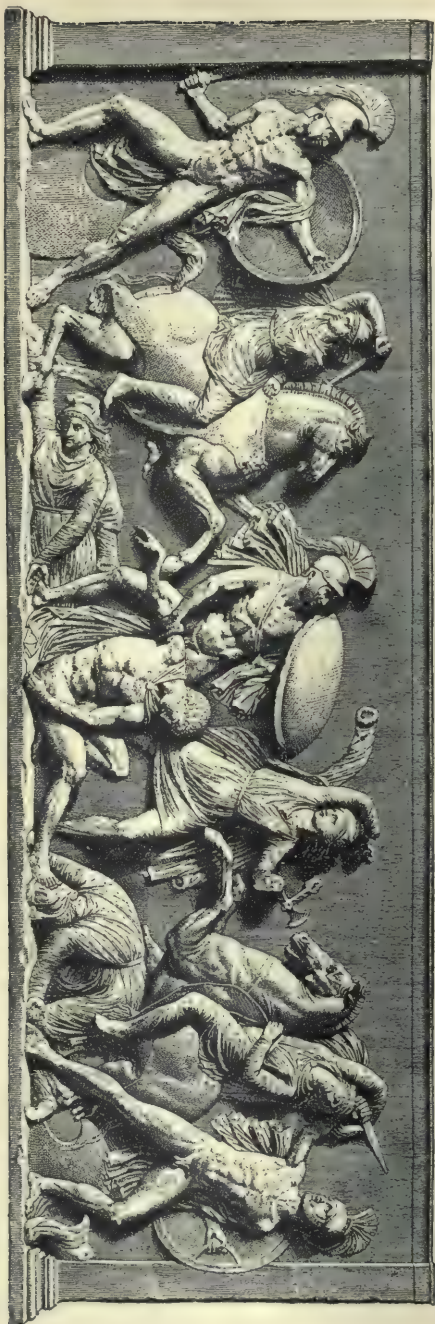


APHRODITE.

(The So-called "Venus of Milo.")



STRIPE OF THE AMAZONS.  
(Sarcophagus Relief, Lucanum.)



of the Trojan war from its remote causes up to the tenth year of its history. Second, the *Æthiopis*, by Arctinus of Miletus, who is supposed to have lived at about the time of the first Olympiad (776 B. C.). It covered the ground between the death of Hector and that of Achilles, treating of the advent of the Amazons and *Æthiopians* in aid of Troy. The poem ended with the struggle for the possession of the arms of Achilles and the suicide of Ajax. Third, the *Little Iliad*, by Lesches, a Lesbian (about Ol. 30), carried the recital down to the fall of Troy. Fourth, the *Nostoi*, in five books by Agias of Trazen, described the homeward journeys of the heroes, except of course Odysseus. Fifth, the *Telegonia* dealt with the adventures of Odysseus, Telemachus, and of Telegonus, son of Odysseus and Circe. The poem opened with the burial of the suitors; Odysseus offers sacrifices to the nymphs and then sails away to Elis; to look after his herds, and is hospitably received by Polyxenus, who, at parting, gives him a large drinking-cup on which are represented the adventures of Trophonius, Agamedes and Augeas. After returning



FIGHT OVER THE BODY OF ACHILLES.  
(Middle-group of the West Gable of the Athena Temple at Aigina.)



to Ithaca he performs the sacrifices commanded by Teiresias, and still following that prophet's commands, goes to the Thesprotians, and marries their queen, Callidice. As king of the Thesprotians he wages war with the Thracians, but Ares, their national god, protects and defeats Odysseus. Callidice dies, and, the kingdom descending to Polypoites, her son by Odysseus, the old Greek hero returns to Ithaca. Meanwhile Calypso has sent Telegonos—for the authorities vary as to whether Calypso or Circe was his mother—to seek his father. He lands in Ithaca, and as he is wandering through the island he meets Odysseus without recognizing him, and kills him. Telegonus then becomes aware of his error and carries the corpse to his mother, as well as Telemachus and Penelope; she makes both the survivors immortal, and Telemachus takes Circe for his wife, and Telegonos marries Penelope.

The confusion and weakness of the end of this epic, as well as some of the earlier incidents, make it clear that the author drew his inspiration from myths that had grown corrupt with time, and that we are far removed from the simplicity of the Homeric age. All of these later epic poets had the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* before them as models, and they supplemented what had been omitted by the older poet, with undoubted zeal but with less original fire. Their work was often admired in antiquity. The Sack of Troy, for instance, by Arctinus, which contained the story of the Trojan horse and the fate of Laocoön, was closely followed by Virgil in the second book of the *Æneid*; and other epics, such as the *Thebais*, furnished a vast amount of material to the later Greek tragedians, and Ovid made liberal use of them all in his *Metamorphoses*. But of all these poems the merest scraps have come down to us, only enough to console us for this loss. If one could fill any one of the gaps in Greek literature, it would not be the cyclic poems that would be called for.

While, so far as we can judge, these epics were marked by the pallor that often distinguishes a copy from the original, the Homeric poems abound with life. Their historic value cannot be determined, but it is hard to conceive that they should not reflect an actual civilization either existing or surviving in tradition, because otherwise they would have had no meaning to those who first listened to them. In no case could a poet, even a creative poet, as those men are called whose intellectual lineage is obscure, have wholly invented a degree of civilization very different from that which he knew from legend or by experience. For one thing, the words would not have existed unless the things themselves either existed or had existed. Thus, even the most original genius could never have invented castles, for instance, as a bit of poetical scenery, unless he had seen or heard of actual



castles. When he had done so, he might have decked them out with extravagant details, such as fathomless moats and cloud-hidden towers, but the mention of the word proves the existence of the thing, for the imagination is closely and inevitably tethered to facts. When men have gone astray, as in the Indian epics, it has been only in the direction of magnifying familiar phenomena that they have erred; they have not definitely devised anything new. The properties of various objects are often confused: horses fly and fish speak, but more than that no one can do. To expect more of men is like searching for a savage who uses logarithms or has invented the telephone. Moreover, these digressions from the truth may be instantly detected, but Homer has for thousands of years stood this test not only without serious loss, but with ever increasing fame for vividness and accuracy. That Homer had ever seen, for example, doors of gold and door-posts of silver such as he speaks of in the palace of Alcinous may perhaps be doubted, but in describing this unknown land he only mentioned something that he had seen or heard of, probably the luxury of the Ionians, with ready amplifications. It is safe to extend the inference from the material to the general representation, and to believe that only from something like the general description of society could the poet have drawn inspiration for his account of the heroic times of Greece. This view especially impresses itself upon the reader when he considers how prominent are the qualities that the poet celebrates among the historical Greeks, as well as the corroboration that archæological investigation gives to his report.

The later epics belong to the vanishing heroic period, during which the early civilization was transforming itself into the shape in which it existed when the lyric poetry began to take the place of the conventional epic. With advancing culture the early simplicity disappeared, yet of the remote past we have other remains.



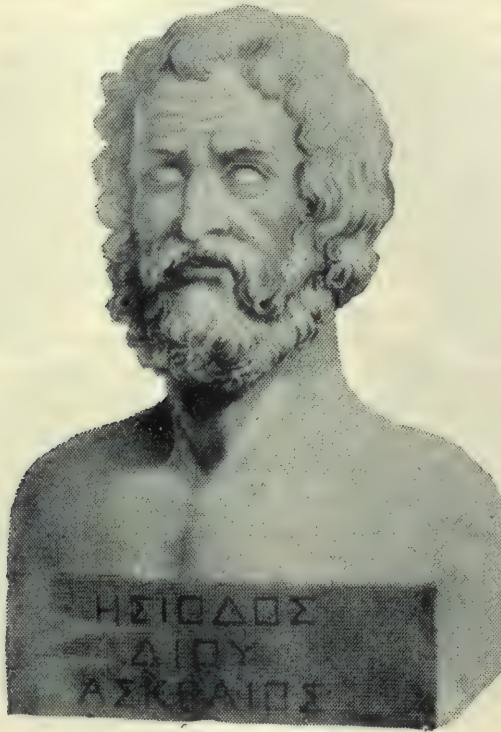
## CHAPTER V.—HESIOD.

- I.—All Our Positive Information about This Poet Most Vague—His Bœotian Origin ; All that This Implies in Comparison with the Ionic Civilization—The Doric Severity and Conservatism—The Devotion to Practical Ends. II.—The Story of Hesiod's Life—His "Works and Days" Described.—Its Thrifty Advice Combining Folk-lore and Farming.—The "Theogony," a Manual of Old Mythology—His Other Work—Its General Aridity.—Illustrative Extracts.

### I.

WHILE the *Odyssey* portrays a tolerably advanced civilization such as we find repeated in the most flourishing period of the middle ages and in some eastern countries, we find Hesiod describing a very different state of things in a very different way. He, too, belongs to a remote and uncertain time, and of him as well as of Homer it is certain that what we know is much less than what we are told, and nothing but the comparative dullness of the Hesiodic poems has saved them from arousing as agitating a discussion as the Homeric poems have done, and among scholars the war has been a hot one. The absence of definite and trustworthy information has had the usual result. No sooner has one critic fixed him securely in one century than a more critical rival has followed and placed him a century or two earlier or later, so that Hesiod swings loose between the very indeterminate period to which Homer is said to have belonged, or possibly a century later, and the seventh century B.C. At some time in this vague age were written the poems ascribed to Hesiod ; at least, the one called "Works and Days" was composed then. Hesiod was an Æolian and a native of Bœotia, a part of Greece, which was a by-word for the dullness and stupidity of its inhabitants. The soil was fertile, but the air was heavy with fogs, and those who anticipated modern theories by crediting the atmosphere with a direct effect upon the intellect found in the mists a satisfactory explanation of the sluggish wits of the Bœotians. It is notorious that no satisfactory warrant can be found for many of these local prejudices which make their appearance in all countries and at all times, and are generally more long lived than accurate. In the Hesiodic poems, at least, we see very clearly marked the differences between the picturesque life of the Ionic race with its foothold in Asia, where it doubtless met and pro-

fited by older civilizations, and the Bœotian, crowded on the mainland, not tempted to undertake foreign travel, content with agricultural prosperity and proud of their political and religious conservatism. Obviously the conditions in which they lived rendered them less likely to produce poems so full of incident and varied emotion as those that the Ionic branch produced. The Homeric epics bear witness to leisure and refinement; the Hesiodic verse is rather that of a home-



HESIOD.

keeping, hard-working people, with a great deal of shrewd sense in worldly matters and somewhat rigid faith in religion; for it was on the mainland that priestcraft established itself with the greatest formality. The Delphian oracle early acquired a prominence in political as well as religious affairs. Moreover, the political conditions were reflected in the religions, as is found to be always the case in our study of history. Thus we see Christianity forming itself into an ecclesiastical system after the model of Roman imperialism; and later, feudalism appearing in the church as well as in society, while the





Reformation is the equivalent in religion of the Renaissance. It may not be impossible to detect a contrast between the different ways in which the Ionians and Dorians regarded religious questions in the literary remains of the two races. The Homeric poems, as we have seen, represented the gods almost as allies of men; the Dorians, however, appear to have imagined a complicated religious system bearing close resemblance to their political condition. Their religion was solemn and simple; their myths were not preserved almost at random, as among the Ionians, they were worked together into a sort of historic relation; they were assumed to refer to the foundation of some lordly house or to belong to the ritual of some deity. It was here that what might be called a theology first appeared, and religion became an important part of civilization.

The contrast between the life portrayed in the Homeric poems and that which Hesiod narrated rather than sang is most vivid. Homer describes the chiefs, the leaders of men, possessed of all heroic qualities, while Hesiod busies himself with the humble occupation of hard-worked peasants bound together in simple communities, without ideals or indeed any other thoughts than those about subsistence and a few meagre holidays. The difference, as it is further portrayed, in religion and politics, defines the distinct social conditions of the mainland with its conservative, undeveloped maintenance of the old traditions of clan life, and the awakening evolution that was produced by foreign intercourse and varied conditions. Hesiod describes the prose side, as we may call it, of feudal life; and the romantic side is sung by Homer, who saw only the glory and bravery of the leaders.

In the cruder civilization the older forms of social existence were spreading far and fastening themselves more firmly on every condition of society. The rigidity of the system was making itself deeply felt. Young and old were closely bound together for the discharge of political and military duties. Everywhere there was evidence of rigid training, which was based mainly on military gymnastics and on music of an orchestral kind. The main point, however, was the close union of people of all ages: it was, to use modern forms of expression, collectivism that prevailed among them rather than individualism, which is always a later growth. Their religious feelings had the solemnity of their political system; even at the present day we see it in the simple majesty of their temples. This seriousness showed itself again in their language, which was marked by brevity and concision. It was not the charm of life that fascinated them, their attention was confined rather to social and political duties. Obviously, in a race like this, literature flourishes less than among an active people attracted in a thousand directions by the manifold charm of life. Indeed,

it may almost be affirmed that it is when the individual most keenly feels his rights and powers, that letters are most brilliant. The Æolians, of which the Dorians were in early times a single branch, possessed many of the qualities which culminated among that race and some of those of the Ionians. The most important divisions of the Æolians were the Bœotians, Thessalians, Elæans and the Lesbians, and in them all is to be noticed a curious indifference to the intellectual life



GYMNASTIC EXERCISES.

in the rest of the Greeks. Their early aristocratic regimen survived long especially among the Bœotians and Thessalians, and only the nobility preserved the training which was widespread among the Dorians. The lower classes were kept in degradation. In the poems of Hesiod, however, we find the simplicity of the Dorian religion rather than the later degeneration of the Æolians. Many poems are indeed the earliest memorials of the hieratic poetry which had grown up in the contemplation of religious questions. In the Homeric poems the gods are accepted as part of the order of things with unquestioning simplicity, but there is a difference here which was



also expressed in the profounder political interests of the people, and there was demanded an explanation that should satisfy a thoughtful people. The very different social conditions brought forth answers unlike those that we find expressed or implied in the Homeric poems, and probably such as had grown up in a distant antiquity. It is very clear that the Hesiodic poems contain collections from remote periods and possibly distant lands, such as could only have been gradually accumulated. To the ancients they were a storehouse of instructive legends concerning nature and religion; a worldly interest was given them by the genealogies of lordly houses, and by the direct, Poor Richard, practical advice concerning husbandry. All of this is remote from the ethical simplicity and undidactic tone of the heroic epics, but it clearly marks a time when life was beginning to be complex.

## II.

Although the time at which Hesiod lived is uncertain, a few accounts of his life have come down to us in his poems. According to these it appears that his father came from Cyme in Æolia and settled in Bœotia. The poet was born in Ascra, and in his youth he tended his father's sheep on Mt. Helicon, in which congenial neighborhood he determined to become a poet. His own version of the choice asserts that his mind was made up by a direct demand from the Muses, who appeared in person and gave him a staff of bay in token of his poetic functions. At a later date was acquired this art of prophesying who should be poets. Much nearer the general experience of mankind is the mention of a lawsuit between himself and his brother Perses about the paternal inheritance, in which—although it is to be remembered that we hear only Hesiod's side—Perses gained his case by tampering with the judges. We are also told that at a poetical contest he won the prize, and he is said to have wandered about as a singer, after the custom that survived the decay of the epic. Further tradition says that he perished by violence at an advanced age.

One mythical story that existed in antiquity was this, that once when Homer and Hesiod contended for a prize it was won by Hesiod. The fact is now, of course, believed by no one, but it has been supposed to refer to the success of Hesiodic poetry over the older form.

The *Works and Days* is the most important of the poems ascribed to Hesiod. It consists of but eight hundred and twenty-eight lines, but a great deal is compressed into this moderate compass. The first three hundred and eighty-three lines are rather ethical than practical: the poet recommends virtue in the abstract before directing its concrete application. After an address to Zeus, who can easily overthrow



the haughty and exalt the humble, the poet tells his brother that there are two sorts of contest, one in courts of law, the other by way of rivalry in farming and manual labor. Shun the first, and try not again, by bribing the judges, to rob me of my own; rather turn thy mind to honest gain. Zeus once imposed pain and toil on men, and because Prometheus, to make their existence easier, secretly brought down fire from heaven to the dwellers upon the earth, he, for a punishment, sent down Pandora with the fateful box enclosing all misfortune. Since then pain and misery possess the world, especially in these present days of the fifth, the iron age, when vice, godlessness and injustice combine to add to the general confusion. Princes are like the hawk who seizes the nightingale and in answer to her outcries says he is the stronger, and to withstand them is but to add disgrace to defeat. But only that city flourishes in prosperous peace, where justice is dispensed to stranger and citizen; on the other hand, where the authorities are bribed to pronounce false judgments, Cronion sends plagues and pests and famine; the race dies out, the women become barren, war ravages land and country, and the ships are sunk in the seas. Countless hosts of immortal beings, the holy messengers of Zeus, wander over the earth, hidden in a mist, and watch the deeds of men, observing whether they act justly or wickedly. Then the people suffer for the misdeeds of their rulers. Animals are subject only to the right of the stronger, but the gods have endowed man with the sense of justice, the most precious of his possessions. The road to evil, O Perses! is easy and near, but the immortal gods have made uprightness almost inaccessible; the path to virtue is steep and hard to climb, but when you have reached the top it is easy and smooth. Work is agreeable to the gods and carries no disgrace; but only honest gain procures lasting benefit. Beware of unkindness to your father and brother, to orphans and to those who claim your protection; pray and sacrifice to the gods with clean hands and an unstained heart. Keep on good terms with friends and neighbors who may be of service to you: invite them to your table, and give them better food than they set before you. Be on your guard against the fascinations of your wife, for whoever confides anything to a woman, confides in a deceiver. Provide for sufficient but not too numerous descendants, who shall receive and augment your possessions.

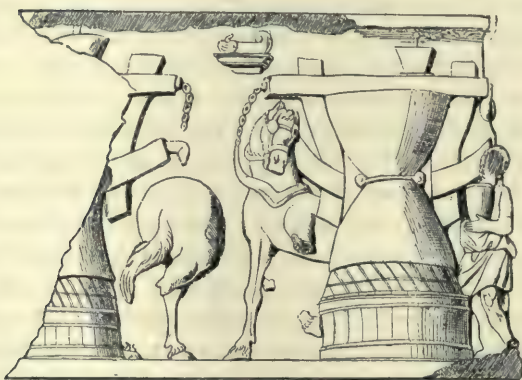
These few hundred lines, with their occasional exalted turn and their frequent utilitarianism of a kind that indicates a long experience, show how omnipresent are the rules of morality and prudence. The first step from savageness brings with it the perception of the need of those virtues which are almost equally rudimentary in an advanced civilization. The earliest records of even the least civilized races

abound with similar moral construction. Almost everywhere, too, we come across signs of a remote past, as in Hesiod's lament over the evil days on which he has fallen, a complaint that Homer frequently uttered, and in the praise of a small family. Even Hesiod's civilization bore signs of a long past.

While the poet has thus established his thesis that virtue is the best course, and that man must work, he proceeds to make clear what sort of work is advisable by giving those directions which were most suited



HAND MILLS.



HORSE MILLS.

to an agricultural people like the Bœotians. He describes the different occupations of the year, after the fashion of a Farmers' Almanac, which also, it will be remembered, inculcates the most approved moral sentiments. First secure a house, tools, and good servants; you want a man without a wife, a maid-servant without children. Then make ready a mill, a mortar, and two plows made out of well-seasoned oak and elm wood, which you will cut down in the forest in autumn. Let a trusty man of about forty, who does not care for the pleasures of youth, draw the furrows with two nine-year-old steers, after he has eaten eight slices of bread for breakfast. The best time

for sowing is when the Pleiad has set for six weeks; then the air is cool and the earth is softened by the frequent rains. Following the plow must come a boy with a hoe to spread the earth over the seed and protect it from the birds. Do not neglect meanwhile to invoke the subterranean gods, that the seed may swell properly. Thus arranging everything properly, you will joyously accumulate a store in your house and never cast envious glances at your neighbor; he rather in his misfortune will envy you. But if you sow at the winter solstice, you will have but a meagre harvest to carry home in your basket. Still all years are not alike, and he who sows late may get even with him who sowed earliest, if he will only observe carefully and sow when the cuckoo first calls from the sprouting oak-leaves and Zeus sends three days of rain. The winter, too, is put to profit by the intelligent farmer. He goes swiftly by the warm inn and the smithy's forge, for the man who idles at the pot-house sinks into poverty. In good season you must warn the men to build sheds against the winter when the north-wind dashes up the waves and in the highlands scatters oaks and pines over the frozen ground. The cowering animals can not stand the cold; the frost pierces their hairy coat and even the wild beasts seek shelter. Then the young maiden gladly lingers in the comfortable room with her mother. But do you wrap yourself up in your long cloak and cover your feet with thick hides, with the hair turned inside, throw a thick cape over your shoulders, put on your head a fur cap lined with felt to keep your ears from freezing when the cold north wind blows in the morning and the mist spreads over the fields. When the days are short and the nights are long, man and beast will be content with half fare, until the earth brings forth a new supply. Sixty days after the winter solstice, hasten to trim the vine, before the swallow returns. When the snail, in fear of the Pleiads, climbs up the young plants, sharpen your sickle for the harvest, and arouse your workmen from their shady seats and from the morning sleep, for now you must be busy and carry the fruit home. The morning-hour is a third of the day and shortens the way and the work. When the thistle is in bloom, and the cicada sends forth its shrill note from the leafy bower, and the heat of the dog-star weakens the



WINE JARS FROM POMPEII.



body, then refresh yourself in the pleasant shade of the rocks with red wine diluted with water, with goat's-milk and the flesh of cattle and kids. As soon as Orion has appeared, order your men to thresh and winnow your corn, and collect your supply in sound vessels. When you have gathered the harvest, get some sturdy dogs and feed them well, that they may protect your property from thieves. Now you may let your men rest and unyoke your steers, until Orion and Sirius reach the zenith. Then is the time to gather your grapes. When this task is done, let them lie for ten days in the sun and for five in the shade, before you press them. When the autumn rains have begun to fall, carry wood to the house for your plowshare and for fuel. Such are the duties of the farm. But if you care to follow



*From Thasos.*



*From Rhodes.*



*From Knidos.*

JARS.

the sea, observe the proper time. As soon as the Pleiades have set and the winds have risen, haul your boat well up on the shore, and make it fast with stones; do not let the rain-water lie in it to rot its timbers; carry all the rigging into the house, and hang the sweeps and the rudder in the smoke. Toward the end of the summer, about fifty days after the nights have begun to grow long, the air is pleasant and the

sea smooth for a voyage. Then you must make your boat ready, drawing it down to the water, and carefully arranging its cargo; but be sure not to delay your return until the autumn winds and storms overtake you. The sea is also safe in the spring when the first leaves are sprouting on the fig. But it is always dangerous to follow the sea, and farming is preferable: death in the waves is a terrible thing. Did not men set the love of gain above life itself, no one would venture on the stormy sea. Consequently do not trust all your possessions to a boat; keep the greater part at home: be moderate in all things.

After thus giving directions for both sea and shore, the author returns to the consideration of domestic questions, and notably to the very important one of the choice of a wife. The husband must be not much over thirty; the wife an honorable maiden from the neighborhood, who shall be rather under twenty. A virtuous wife is an inestimable treasure, but an extravagant one whitens her husband's hair before its time. Be true and upright to your friend; never be the first to quarrel with him, and when you have fallen out with him, be

ready to make peace. Hospitality is a duty, but it must be practised with caution. Do not be prone to fault-finding, and reproach no one with his poverty. Do not despise the club-feasts; they are pleasant and cheap. Then follows a medley of precepts for various incidents of daily life: that one must utter a propitiatory prayer before fording a river, that one must not pare his nails at a banquet after a sacrifice, etc., etc., all this part being a curious collection of folk-lore such as survives to-day in the prejudice against sitting down thirteen at table, and against spilling salt. Of the same sort is the list of the unlucky and lucky days of the month: thus, the eleventh is a good day for shearing sheep; the twelfth for reaping corn, and the seventh is another very lucky day, while the fifth, on the other hand, is a very dark one. Blessings and curses are thus mingled for very obscure reasons. Sometimes we see some ground for the difference, as, for example, the seventeenth is a fortunate date for threshing corn, because, in one month, that was the feast day of Demeter; but often no reason at all was given. The whole statement is interesting as a record of the superstitions that are probably the oldest memorials of human ingenuity, and are certainly the most widespread. Here at least we touch a chord that the Greeks had in common with every race. Everywhere else they were superior; here the simplest note is touched, and one has an almost malicious pleasure in finding that race regarding these old saws and snatches of proverbial wisdom as little less than inspired truths. This poem became a text-book for schools among the later Greeks, and was held in high honor for many generations as an instructor in practical life, and its influence has been felt in modern times as the progenitor of didactic poetry, a form of composition that has done much to give literature a bad name as an artificial thing. Yet, it is only the third-hand didactic poems that are artificial; the original was a natural expression of current learning and wisdom; its form, the hexameter verse, was the sole instrument at the author's command.

Its real modern equivalent is to be found in some of Franklin's Poor Richard writings and in the Old Farmer's Almanacs. Indeed the resemblance is very striking, because both the old Greek poem and the more recent books of rustic lore are made up of proverbs. The extracts below from the *Works and Days* will make this clear. Even the modern works of which mention has been made fail to wear a deeper air of hoary tradition than do the musty, humdrum bits of wisdom with which Hesiod decks his aged poems. They were sung by rhapsodists in remote antiquity, and held an exalted position as rivals of the Homeric lays. They were, in fact, the prose of those early days. Their main importance we may take to have been, not so much



the utilitarian value of the advice, as the ethical dignity which underlies these simple adages. And to us, while the æsthetic delight to be got from their perusal is small, they are of interest as the earliest utterances of men whose future development can be closely followed in political and literary history. They are, too, the earliest examples of the popular poetry of antiquity, as distinguished from the romantic.

Yet this division of popular and romantic, it must be remembered, is one that is employed only for our convenience; the poets sung in the way most suited to their message and their habits, with no conscious perception of the school to which they have been assigned by later critics. In Homer we have pictures of an active, warlike society, in Hesiod the arid representations of a peaceful, hard-working people, in whose hands poetry acquired all the simplicity of prose, as well as its more essential qualities. Yet if Hesiod fails to charm the reader who seeks solely æsthetic delights, he yet makes good this apparent deficiency by the aid he gives to the student of history and sociology from his records of an early time and people who knew no other adventures than those of bad weather, droughts and floods, and whose most bitter enemy was their unlimited superstition.

Another famous poem that is ascribed to Hesiod, and possibly by its superior importance helped to keep up the authority of the *Works and Days*, is the *Theogony*. It is of moderate length, only 1,022 lines, but it was as much a sacred book among the Greeks as any that belongs to their bequest to posterity. Like some of the sacred books of other nations, it is rather a history of the beginning of the world and of the gods than an appeal in behalf of the religious sentiment; and that the history is incomplete and fragmentary only adds to its likeness to the general class. The poem itself contains not only the earliest statement that has come down to us, but also the earliest statement known to the Greeks themselves. Just as the *Works and Days* condensed into fitting expression the practical experience that had been slowly amassed by many generations of tillers of the soil, and gave utterance to the wisdom that long attrition had worn down to proverbs and adages, so did the *Theogony* contain current myths of uncertain antiquity and the religious lore of centuries.

Even in the *Odyssey* we find religious traditions sung by the bards, and it was probably from old hymns and shorter legends that the *Theogony* was able to draw the tolerably complete collection of stories that gave it its fame. Hesiod begins with a cosmogony. The beginning of things was chaos, the origin of which is, naturally enough, left obscure; then appear the earth, Tartarus, or the nether-world, and Eros, the principle or god of love. Here at once we have confusion, in this introduction of the god among these inanimate creations,



and in the fact that no further use is made of him. In the old tradition Eros is the principle that formed the world, but here he is thrust into the story and then left inactive, doubtless because Hesiod confused some of the stories that he had heard, which, however, are repeated by other authorities. Then follows the separation of night and day; the earth produces the heavens and the seas, earth, seas and heavens being the three immediate objects that face every human being. The account of the generation of the gods is much fuller, and we are told that the heavens and earth produced the Titans, the oldest race of divine beings, from whom are descended the younger race of the sons of Kronos, who attain power only by severe struggles. The genealogy of the abundant deities, which concludes with a list of the goddesses who selected human beings for their mates, shows a curious survival of a very old and barbarous theology, made up of a medley of lust and cruelty, that gradually lost authority with the Greeks as their civilization ripened. Possibly it is fair to explain some of the exclusive devotion of the Greeks to artistic and intellectual matters by the crudity of their obsolescent religious system, which left them free to follow the natural tendency of men towards their own individual development, and finally left them shattered. On the other hand, the grand religious conceptions of the Hebrew race were found in connection with an almost entire absence of the qualities that adorned the Greeks, and has made them a firm unit in the face of every trial. We see again in the artistic and religious revival that accompanied the Renaissance how the corruption and meagreness of the religious sentiment of the middle ages fell away from the men who were intoxicated by the discovery of antique culture, and left them free to follow their literary and artistic tastes, until the Reformation and the Catholic revival nipped the new civilization and greatly modified the direction of its growth.

Yet these myths held a singular authority among the Greeks, as the earliest and in most respects the final statement of the groundwork of their religion. The later versions of the old stories stand very much under the influence of the Hesiodic theogony; what differed from it failed to secure general acceptance and survived only in remote places. Hesiod, by collecting the abundant material and putting it into an impressive shape, secured for himself a position that corresponded with that which Homer won by the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The two names stand together in the obscure beginning of Greek literature, baffling the scholars who try to make too positive statements about their work. Of their great influence, however, proofs abound. Naturally many writings by different hands drifted to Hesiod, as many miscellaneous poems had gathered about Homer's name. Thus there is one called

the Shield of Heracles, which bears a strong likeness to the Homeric description of the Shield of Achilles in the eighteenth book of the Iliad. It lacks, however, the merit of the original, and is made up of awkward imitations. Other poems that were ascribed to Hesiod have been lost. Some of these were probably the work of his followers, the same men who inserted lines of their own into such part of his work as came down to us. The later importance of Hesiod is not to be determined by the poetic quality of his work, but rather by the abundance of legends which he had collected from the past, and from his statement of the early traditions that went to the formation of his explanation of the universe and the story of the gods. Historians, poets, philosophers, were compelled to go back to him for material wherewith to work, and for their wants he was without a rival.

## HESIOD.

Suffer thy foe thy table ; call thy friend  
 In chief one near, for if occasion send  
 Thy household use of neighbours, they undrest  
 Will haste to thee, where thy allies will rest  
 Till they be ready. An ill neighbour is  
 A curse ; a good one is as great a bliss.  
 He hath a treasure, by his fortune sign'd,  
 That hath a neighbour of an honest mind.  
 No loss of ox or horse a man shall bear  
 Unless a wicked neighbour dwell too near.  
 Just measure take of neighbours, just repay,  
 The same receiv'd, and more, if more thou may,  
 That, after needing, thou may'st after find  
 Thy wants' supplier of as free a mind.  
 Take no ill gain ; ill gain brings loss as ill,  
 Aid quit with aid ; good will pay with good will.  
 Give him that hath given ; him that hath not, give not ;  
 Givers men give ; gifts to no givers thrive not ;  
 Giving is good, rapine is deadly ill ;  
 Who freely gives, though much, rejoiceth still ;  
 Who ravins is so wretched, that, though small  
 His first gift be, he grieves as if 'twere all.  
 Little to little added, if oft done,  
 In small time makes a great possession.  
 Who adds to what is got, needs never fear  
 That swarth-cheek'd hunger will devour his cheer ;  
 Nor will it hurt a man though something more  
 Than serves mere need he lays at home in store ;  
 And best at home, it may go less abroad.  
 If cause call forth, at home provide thy rode,  
 Enough for all needs, for free spirits die  
 To want, being absent from their own supply.  
 Which note, I charge thee. At thy purse's height,  
 And when it fights low, give thy use his freight ;  
 When in the midst thou art, then check the blood ;  
 Frugality at bottom is not good.  
 Even with thy brother think a witness by,  
 When thou would'st laugh, or converse liberally ;  
 Despair hurts none beyond credulity.

## FROM "WORKS AND DAYS."

Two plows compose, to find the work at home,  
 One with a share that of itself doth come  
 From forth the plow's whole piece, and one set on ;  
 Since so 'tis better much, for, either gone,  
 With th' other thou mayest instantly impose  
 Work on thy oxen. On the laurel grows,  
 And on the elm, your best plow-handles ever ;  
 Of oak your draught-tree ; from the maple never  
 Go for your culter ; for your oxen chuse  
 Two males of nine years old, for then their use  
 Is most available, since their strengths are then  
 Not of the weakest, and the youthful mean  
 Sticks in their nerves still ; nor will these contend,  
 With skittish tricks, when they the stitch should end,  
 To break their plow, and leave their work undone.  
 These let a youth of forty wait upon,  
 Whose bread at meals in four good shivers cut,  
 Eight bits in every shive ; for that man, put  
 To his fit task, will see it done past talk  
 With any fellow, nor will ever balk  
 In any stitch he makes, but give his mind  
 With care to his labour. And this man no hind  
 (Though much his younger) shall his better be  
 At sowing seed, and, shunning skilfully,  
 Need to go over his whole work again.  
 Your younger man feeds still a flying vein  
 From his set task, to hold his equals chat,  
 And trifles work he should be serious at.  
 Take notice, then, when thou the crane shalt hear  
 Aloft out of the clouds her clangs rear,  
 That then she gives thee signal when to sow,  
 And Winter's wrathful season doth foreshow,  
 And then the man that can no oxen get,  
 Or wants the season's work, his heart doth eat.  
 Then feed thy oxen in the house with hay ;  
 Which he that wants with ease enough will say,  
 " Let me, alike, thy wain and oxen use."  
 Which 'tis as easy for thee to refuse,  
 And say thy oxwork then importunes much.  
 He that is rich in brain will answer such :  
 " Work up thyself a wagon of thine own ;  
 For to the foolish borrower is not known  
 That each wain asks a hundred joints of wood ;  
 These things ask forecast, and thou shouldst make good  
 At home before thy need so instant stood."



## BOOK II.--THE LYRIC POETRY.

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### INTRODUCTORY.

The Hexameter as an Expression Adapted to a Feudal Period, when Comparative Uniformity Prevailed—Changing Circumstances, with Added Complexity of Life, Saw New Forms of Utterance Introduced into Literature—These, However, had Already Enjoyed a Long, if Unrecognized, Life among the People : Such were Liturgical, as well as Popular, in Their Nature, and Run Back to Primeval Savageness.

WHAT we know of the poetry of Hesiod makes it clear that the hexameter had become the approved form of literary expression, even for verse which differed greatly from the broad flow of the early epic. Yet the change in the subject and manner of treatment foreboded a corresponding change in the manner of utterance, for a race so many-sided as the Greek could not fail to seek for novelty. Homer and Hesiod, although probably not contemporary, show us two sides of the shield, the noble and the democratic ; the later political modifications are represented in the abundant lyric poetry. Indeed, it may not be fanciful to see in the rule of the hexameter a reflection of the general uniformity of the heroic age, just as the monotony of the mediæval epics represents the formal society of feudalism, or the sway of the heroic verse throughout Europe in the last century expresses a notable harmony in the general direction of thought. Around the heroic age, as about every period in which an aristocracy is dominant, there gathered a certain amount of conventionality ; and in such conditions whatever form seems best is universally adopted, because it is part of a system that carries the authority of the whole into every part. Thus, the heroic verse in England was used for philosophical poetry, for humorous verse, for amorous epistles, for religious discussions ; literary etiquette enforced this one form, as social etiquette enforced the wig, and among the first signs of literary revolt was the attempt to make use of other verse. And while every complicated form is of course made up of numberless crude fragments, we observe that every early society, all new civilization, is forced to control itself by continual reference to rigid rules, and that only long practice secures simplicity,

just as an adult forgets the countless rules that are forever dinned into children.

In Greece, with the political changes that began in the eighth century before Christ, we find, as we have said above, similar changes in the poetry. Already Hesiod, who yet makes use of the old form, speaks of himself, recounts his fortunate meeting with the muses, and speaks of his father and brother as well, while Homer's personality is as absent from his poems as is Shakspeare's from his plays. Yet obviously it is in the appearance of lyric poetry that the new feeling of individuality finds its completest expression. The very essence of a lyric is the personal cry, and when it began to be heard in Greek literature the epic was sinking into the same state of artificiality that it has reached in the hands of some modern poets. To seek for the first lyric song is like seeking for the first sigh. It is obvious that mothers must have sung lullabies to their children, and that men and women must have lightened their work by song. One might as well imagine that the first words of infancy are a discussion of the binomial theorem as that the first poetic utterance of the Greeks was the smooth hexameter of the Homeric poems. Yet in them we find that none of the singers have any other subject than the myths belonging to the Trojan circle. Even the Sirens with their melodious voice told Odysseus that they knew everything that the Argives and Trojans endured in vast Troy by the will of the gods; but, after all, this may be only a proof of another fascinating quality, their tact in choosing the subject which Odysseus would have been most anxious to hear celebrated, and possibly they varied their subject for different listeners; otherwise they would surely have belied their reputation. Great and widespread as was the popularity of the hexameter, we must necessarily suppose that some other compacter style of verse was employed for stilling refractory children. It is impossible to show that the Greek lyric poetry grew up from the folk-songs, but it is well to notice that the most usual subjects of the popular poetry were the lament and the love-song, as they were of the lyric verse. We do not know the measures to which the folk-songs were composed. The Linos song, mentioned above, seems to have been sung at the gathering of the grapes, and to have been a mournful lay for the death of the summer, which was personified as a beautiful youth. This form of nature-worship assumed various appearances in different regions; it is closely allied with the lament for Adonis, that for Hyacinthus, and with the Phrygian festival in memory of Attis, all of which are of Asiatic origin. Homer also makes mention of the marriage-song or epithalamion, which appears to have been sung by two choruses of men and women.

The qualities of these early forms of choral poetry carry us back to

a remote past when bands of kinsmen, who owned all their property in common, took part together in all the ceremonies of life and religion, after a fashion that still exists among North American Indians and other savage races. Many of these old conditions maintained themselves among the Greeks, and especially among the conservative Dorians, until a late date, such as the bands of warriors. Their survival in literature is apparent in their choral poetry, that depended on the union of song, dance, and music for its full expression; and it was in this combination that its main success lay. Throughout, it was the state, as distinguished from the individual, that was the object of their enthusiasm; their festivals were occasions of general rejoicing, combin-



DANCING SATYR AND MAENAD OR PRIESTESS OF DIONYSUS.

ing religious and political significance, in which groups divided by sex, age, and social condition took part. This tendency, inherited from conditions familiar to all early civilizations, became part of their literary triumphs, as in the complicated poems of Stesichorus and his rivals, while it also showed itself in the rigid and complicated system of Pythagoras. This, however, leads us far from our present subject, which is concerned with the remotest antiquity. We must not let the literary reverence that we feel for the marvellous work of the Greeks blind us to its probable origin in the survival of old savage rites and



festivals. Our notions of literary work, which we inherit from centuries of artificial composition, naturally tend to persuade us that in the past, as later, poems took their rise anywhere except from such crude beginnings, and that the form is as remote as the thought from any of the qualities of barbarism. There is a desperate feeling that at least the Greeks created something out of nothing, even if the art is now lost. Yet the close connection between all the conventionalities, religious and festive, of wild races, makes it clear that in the union of song, dance, and music of the perfected Greek choral song, we have the survival of old solemnities that belonged to all savage races; that the famous Pyrrhic dance finds its nearest likeness in a Red Indian war-dance; and that the common belief in the exclusiveness of the classics is not legitimately established, and cannot wholly maintain itself in the presence of the rapidly accumulating mass of evidence about uncivilized peoples. The theory of the miraculous powers of genius is simply a superfluous hypothesis when confronted by such testimony, which, however, yet fails to explain why the Greeks made so much out of so little.

Besides these forms, which were almost of a liturgical character, there were those sung by men and women at various occupations, such as work in the fields, while tending their herds, pressing wine, grinding corn, etc., as well as lamentations at funerals, songs at the birth of infants, lullabies, lays of beggars—the list is endless. One of these last was the swallow-song, sung by boys in spring as they wandered begging from house to house, a custom that, we are told, owed its origin to one Cleobules, when there happened to be need of a general collection for the benefit of paupers. Another class consisted of *scolia*, or drinking-songs, which were sung at feasts. These, however, cannot be said to have belonged to really popular poetry, for the privilege of sitting after meals and listening to songs was one that obviously belonged to only a few men of leisure. It is easy, however, to suppose that some of the best of these verses may have found their way to the common people.

## CHAPTER I.—THE EARLIER LYRIC POETS.

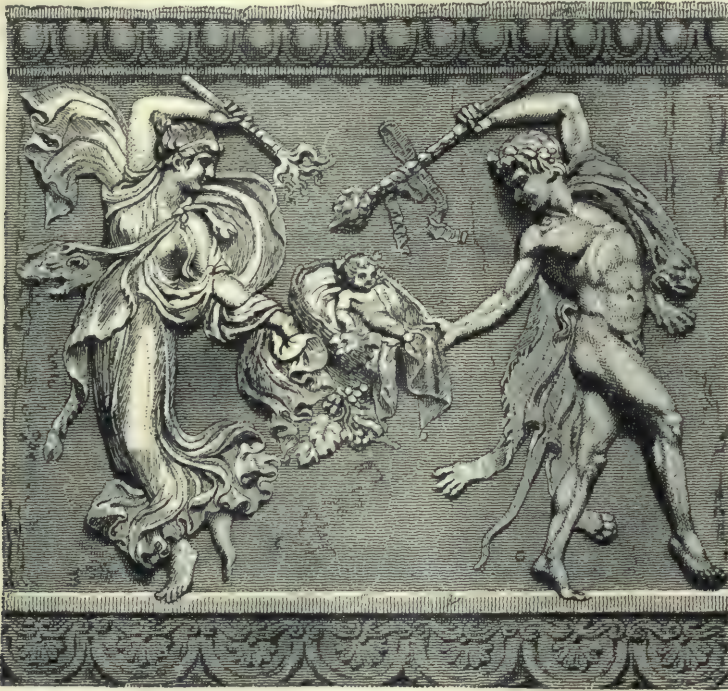
I.—The Influence of Religion on the Early Growth of the Lyric Poetry—The Traditional Origins: Orpheus and Musæus—The Importance of Music—Its Condition in Early Times—Its Use as an Aid to Poetry—The Traditional Olympus, the Father of Music. II.—Callinus and the Elegy—Its Use by Archilochus, and the Growth of Individuality—The Value of the New Forms as Expressions of the Political Changes Then Appearing. III.—Simonides and His Denunciation of Women—His Melancholy—The Meagreness of the Lyrical Fragments Impedes Our Knowledge—The Extent of Our Loss Conjectured.

### I.

WHILE the existence of song among the people is thus shown, it will have been noticed that many of their verses had a religious significance, and it is probably from the religious songs that this lyric poetry derived its origin. We may conjecture that at an early period there was no chasm between profane and religious poetry and that every observation of nature was the observation of a mysterious divine force. Throughout civilization we notice the gradual limitation of religion to spiritual things, and in early Greece with the attainment of luxury there came the representation of human life after the methods that had previously been employed for religious purposes. It is easy to see that the expression of thanksgiving to a god for a victory might extend to celebrating the bravery of successful warriors, and when Napoleon said that God was on the side of the heaviest battalions he uttered what mankind had long known to be true, had known indeed ever since war had begun. The oldest priestly poet was said to have been Orpheus, who carries us back to a remote connection between the Thracians and the Greeks. The Orphic Mysteries were a secret worship of Dionysus, the god of wine, and they appear to have spread from Pieria, which lay between Thessaly and Macedonia, to the river Hebrus in Thrace, and later to have existed in Bœotia and the island Lesbos. The Thracians were in immemorial time devoted to music and song, so that Orpheus, the founder of the mysteries, is famous as a singer. Probably the celebration of the mysteries was accompanied by vocal and instrumental music. To Epimenides, who lived in the latter half of the seventh century before Christ, were ascribed various poems of religious import. Musæus, on the other hand, and Eumol-



pus, as was said above, were mythical poets who belong in the chaotic past and are said to have carried the mysteries into Attica. To both were ascribed religious poems, and Musæus bears the same mythical relation to the Eleusinian Mysteries that Orpheus bears to the Orphic. In the time of Aristophanes and of Plato these poems were regarded as genuine memorials of very remote antiquity, but later they lost this fame. Olen again had the reputation of being the earliest writer of hymns, which belonged from unknown times to the worship of the Delian Apollo. But one might as well try to draw a map of the An-



THE DIONYSUS CHILD.

tartic continent as to make a history of this remote antiquity, where the most careful erudition of modern scholars can only grope in a blinding fog. It is a hopeless task to write history without facts. All that we can know is that religious poetry was in the hands of priests at a very early period. It is also known that this poetry was accompanied by music. At the religious festivals there were dances, songs and music, games and contests of athletic skill, all being habits which we shall find surviving in historic times. That this blending of sacred and profane rites might easily lead to the extension of song and music



is evident. We see a similar occurrence in the growth of the modern drama from the mediæval religious mysteries.

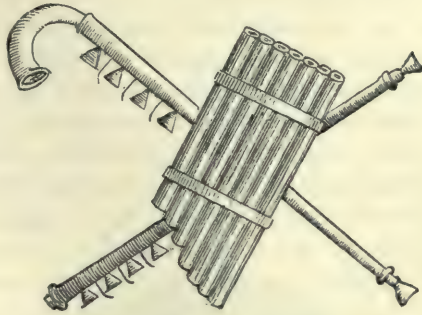
It is hard for us to comprehend the importance of music among the Greeks; their eager and curious minds found no ancient languages or history or scientific work awaiting them, and the education of youth consisted almost entirely of physical training and of mental and moral instruction under the influence of music. Music was expected to be a valuable means of forming the character, and not a luxury, as all artistic appreciation is with us moderns. The passions of the young were not to be awakened, but controlled, purified, and brought into complete harmony by this art. All the religious festivals, various as



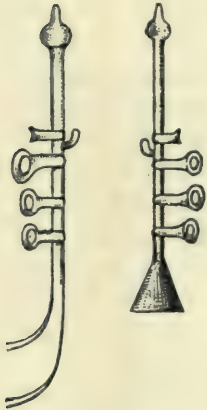
GODS AND PRIESTS OF THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES.  
(From a Relief-Vase from Cumæ at Petersburg.)

they were, were alike in the prominence given to music, which was either refining or inspiring or exciting. Such at least was the division made by philosophers. Just what was meant by these words is obscure; all we know is that great store was set by the music, but exactly what the music was is lost in obscurity. With the vocal and instrumental music the dance was closely connected, as we shall see in the discussion of the Greek drama. While all this remote history was obscure even to those Greeks whose works have come down to us, many of the statements which satisfied them have proved too vague and evidently inaccurate to suit modern scholars. Yet it is known

that the favorite instruments used were the flute, and, for strings, the lyre, of which last various modifications are mentioned. The syrinx, or shepherd's pipe, was the common property of the whole Indo-European race. String instruments were also familiar in the same remote antiquity as the flute, but it was from Phrygia that there came renewed impulse to playing the flute, and it grew at about the time of the first Olympiad to share much of the



DOUBLE FLUTES AND SHEPHERD'S PIPES.

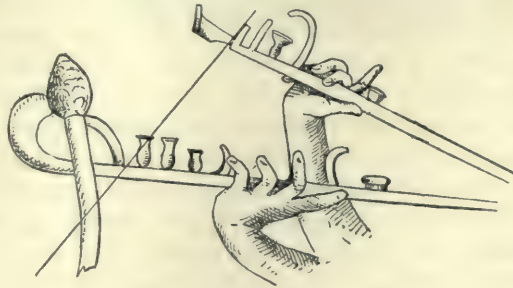


FLUTES.

prominence of stringed instruments. The singer accompanied himself on the guitar, or some instrument of that kind; only later arose the custom of playing upon it without song. For obvious reasons, the flute was always played by another person than the singer, and those who performed on it, except in Bœotia, were foreigners; for the Greeks were unwilling to play upon the instrument, because the practice compelled some distortion of the features, and so offended this people with their keen love of beauty. Often both the flute and stringed instruments were employed.

The main use of music was to serve as an aid to poetry; thus it was used first in religious ceremonies, and at an early date it was employed

in connection with profane verse. The flute accompanied the formulas of prayer, and in time it accompanied festive songs; later the flute and stringed instruments were used together. Music, song, and dance were combined to accompany poetry, to which, however, they were always subordinate.



FLUTES.

The father of music, as Homer was the father of poetry, was Olym-

pus, a Phrygian, who is said to have lived towards the end of the eighth century before Christ. This was the season when the Phrygian civilization flowered, and from that country Greece received the most important elements of its musical culture. We read that Midas, the Phrygian king, received the reciters of the Homeric poems at his court, and the Greeks derived what they could get from their neighbors. It was as a composer for the flute that Olympus was famous. It was under the influence of the Phrygian music that the use of the flute became prominent in religious ceremonies. Thence it swiftly spread to profane poetry. The flute was used to accompany the elegy; the iambic poetry was sung in connection with stringed instruments; while the songs employed either or both.

## II.

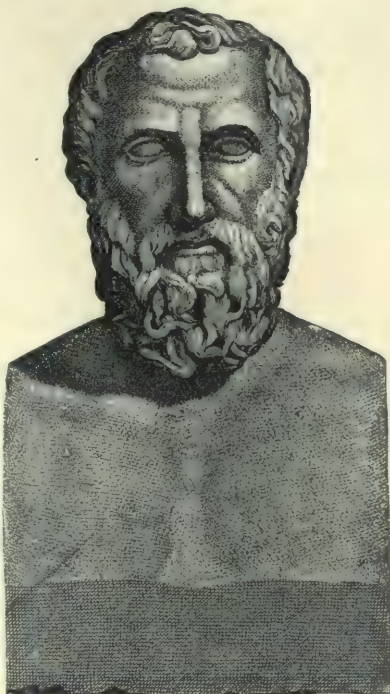
These divisions of the poetry that made their appearance when the impersonal epic was fading away were not hard and fast divisions, but were the various forms used almost equally by different writers. The elegy is simply a poem written in alternate hexameters and pentameters, each pair of which was called a distich. The origin of this form was long sought for by the Greeks, and they commonly named Callinus, an Ephesian poet who is said to have lived about 720 B.C., as its inventor. It may at least be agreed that he was the first to use this measure of whom any mention has come down to us. As we should naturally expect, in what few fragments of his work have been spared by time, and in what we are told about him, there are traces of the surviving influences of the expiring epic to match this variation of the familiar measure. Thus, in one of his elegies he appears to have treated a part of the Trojan story, and in the longest bit of his work that has reached us, a fragment of but twenty-one lines, we are reminded quite as much of the epic poetry as of the later similar elegies. Yet it is dangerous to build too much on so uncertain a foundation, for that Callinus wrote the elegy is open to grave doubt; and even if the fragment of the poem attributed to him is genuine, we lack the earlier steps that led up to the comparatively complete form in which we find even the earliest elegies.

Almost simultaneous with the date assigned to Callinus is the appearance of Archilochus, who made use of the form already employed and carried it to a fuller development. While Callinus may have rested on the earlier epic, Archilochus at least speaks out freely in his own person; attacking his enemies and by no means sparing his own faults. We know that he was born in the island of Paros, and was the son of



Telesiphos, a man of position who was deputed by the Parians to found a colony in Thasos. Yet Archilochus was driven by poverty to leading a life of adventure, as a mercenary soldier and as a colonist at Thasos, without much profit. In Paros he was betrothed to Neobule, a daughter of Lycambes, who later revoked his assent to the match, and thus aroused the indignation of the rejected lover, who expressed his wrath in the most violent manner. His revengeful satires, written in the iambic metre, are said to have driven both Lycambes and his daughter to hang themselves. This statement, whether true or not, at least proves the bitterness of his attack, which the few fragments that survive painfully attest. Yet in antiquity his literary skill was warmly admired, and he was frequently placed by the side of Homer as an early and wonderful poet, although, on the other hand, some condemned his asperity. What the Greeks felt was gratitude to the man who first spoke out what was in his soul, thus indicating the way in which their literature was to attain its highest triumph. The change from the vagueness of the obsolescent epic to the expression of personal feeling was like that which men felt at the end of the last century when the romantic poets turned their backs on philosophic and didactic verse and gave utterance to their own emotions, their hopes and fears. In the few bits that eluded the timidity of the monks who were repelled by the coarseness of Archilochus, we see what was destined to be the great

charm of the lyric poetry of Greece—its absolute directness. The light came directly from the poet's heart; in modern times it is too often refracted by passing through foreign culture. Burns in Scotland and Günther in Germany almost alone among modern poets speak with the classic directness. And as they both were the perfected representations of forgotten predecessors, it is impossible for us to believe that Archilochus had not the work of earlier men behind him, by whom the measures that he used were brought to



ARCHILOCHUS.

something like his vigor. His undoubted coarseness is more like a survival of original savagery than an invention of his own, if, indeed, a man ever invents any thing. Certainly this hypothesis is more tenable than the contrary one, that he devised the various measures which he handled with such uniform skill. His satires, hymns, none of which have reached us, elegiacs, etc., show his versatility, and in some of the fragments we find abundant evidence of the intensity and the appropriate expression of his feelings. In the variety and acerbity of his poems we see reflected the confusion of his times, when a restless spirit was impelling the Greeks to found new colonies and there was a general severing of older ties.

The following translation, with a few extracts given below, will show what we know of his qualities :

Oh ! heart, my heart, see thou yield not, but bear  
 Thyself unflinchingly before the foe,  
 With breast held firm to meet the hostile spear.  
 Then, if thou conquer, joy not overloud ;  
 Nor, if thou'rt vanquished, shalt thou seek thy home.  
 Express thy joy but with a modest voice ;  
 And sink, o'erwhelmed with grief, upon the ground ;  
 Nor be unseemly with thy woe o'ercome,  
 But measure in thy joy and grief be found.

It may, indeed, be asserted that every time of political change is accompanied by an overhauling of the current literary methods, not necessarily as a result, but as a simultaneous product of men's altering opinions and feelings. The equable, placid artistic beauty of the Homeric poems is as unmistakably an indication of a period of political repose as is a wheat-field of the existence of agriculture ; and the nature of the early civilization of the heroic times may be gathered from the glory that is cast upon the brave leaders and the insignificance of common men. We see an aristocracy rejoicing in its best qualities, and yet undisturbed by popular revolution, quite as distinctly as we see in Pope's poems the social importance of men of education and refinement, or the general content that characterized the middle ages in the epics of that period. At the first dawn of Greek civilization, as we see it reflected in Homer, the king ruled by divine right, without question ; this submission, however, gave way to indifference, which was in time followed by antipathy, and at the period when the possession of power was sought by an oligarchy or contested by despots we find the literature expressing, not merely excited political or martial feeling, but also the new importance of the individual, as we see it again finding utterance at the beginning of the Renaissance after the long reign of the middle ages, during which men had drawn types



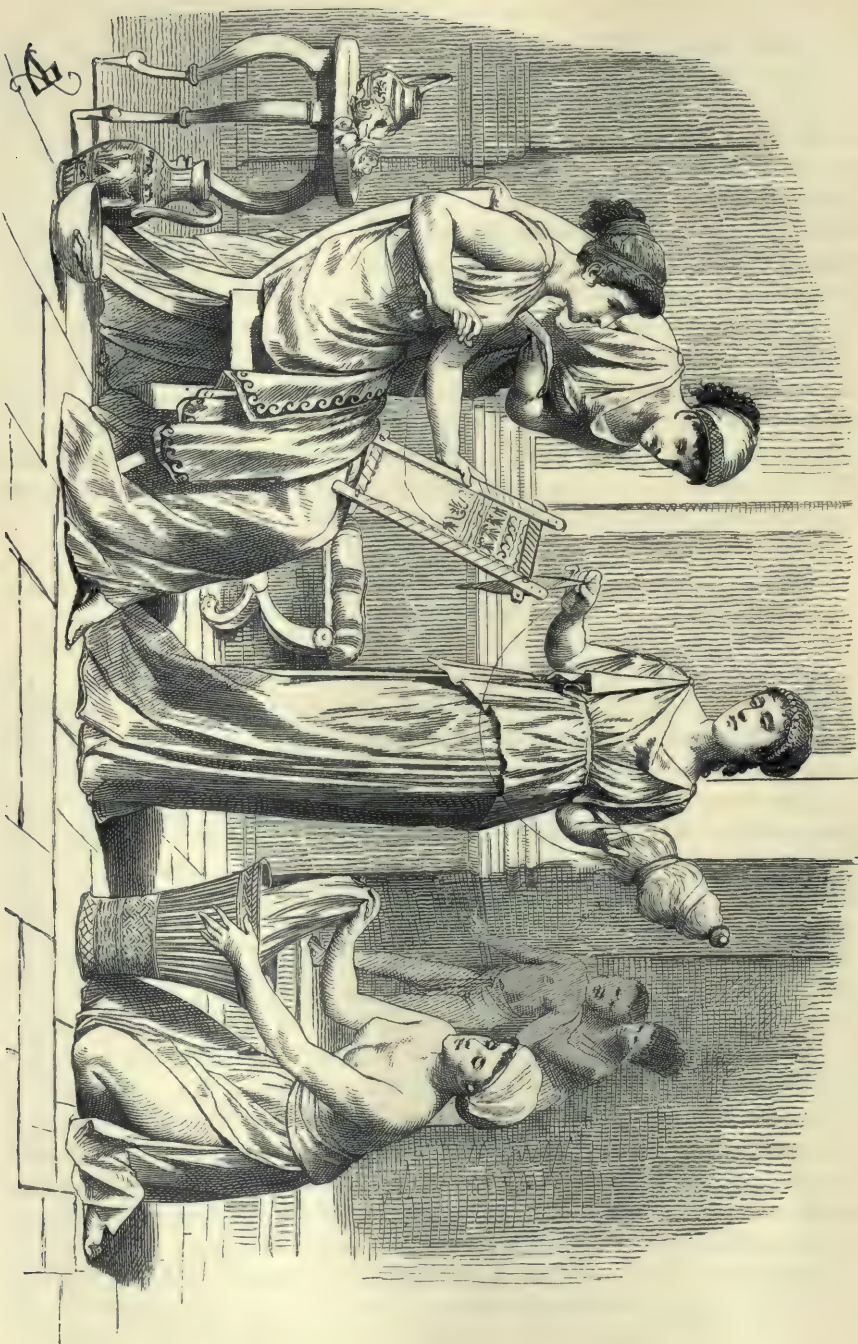
rather than characters in their poetry, as they had done in their painting; for portraiture, it will be remembered, only began with the Renaissance. A similar change occurred with the outbreak of the Romantic revival towards the end of the last century, when the representation of man in the abstract gave way to the more vivid delineation of intenser personal feeling. And, since politics and letters are but part of human interest, we may see elsewhere indications of similar change in the new advance of colonization and the making over of mercantile conditions at both of these important eras, as we see it in the geographical reconstruction of Greece at the expiration of the heroic age. While these lie outside of our attention, the changes in the music and measures that accompanied this development of Grecian life find their diminished counterpart in modern times. The growth of the elegiac metre, the use of anapætic and iambic metres, as well as the musical variations, all of which came into prominence at this time, were the natural expression of the general change, and are such as invariably accompany a period of revolution.

### III.

Simonides, the son of Crines, of Samos, who carried a colony to the island of Amorgos, belongs to this list of early lyric poets. He wrote two books of elegies treating of Samian archæology, which have not come down to us. What we have of his work consists of some fragments of his iambics in the Ionic dialect, all but two being mere scraps. One of these, consisting of one hundred and eighteen lines, treats of the usual subject of the satirist, the faults of women, after a fashion that recalls Hesiod, very much as Archilochus recalls Homer.

When the world was created, woman was lacking, but soon she appeared and was endowed with various qualities of animals and inanimate things: one has those of the fox; another of the dog, and never holds her peace; a third of clay; the next of the sea, and is consequently changeable. One, however, is sprung from the bee, and from this industrious ancestry inherits a few attractive domestic qualities. This artificial genealogy bears all the marks of antiquity, and already Hesiod in the *Theogony* had compared the idle and pleasure-seeking women to the drones of the hive. This semi-facetious denunciation of the female sex was then already classic, and it acquired added charm, not merely from the new form in which it was expressed, but from its keener application to the modified society of these later days. In the heroic age the position of women had been a tolerably exalted one;





GREEK WOMEN AT HOME.

but now they had lost that, and had become subordinate to the men, and had thereby become exposed to abuse, for no one ever lived who praised his slaves. They now began to be regarded in some quarters as the original cause of all misfortune, as necessary evils, and consequently as legitimate objects of satire and malevolence. This opinion was not universal, however; for although among the Ionians the custom grew, spreading among them, perhaps, from their oriental neighbors, of shutting up the women in their separate quarters, and the Dorians kept them under somewhat strict control, the Æolians, on the other hand, allowed them greater freedom, and, as we shall see, some of the richest gems of lyric verse were composed by women of that race, as well as of the Doric, while there are no women poets among the Ionians.

The other fragment of Simonides is a melancholy expression of the misery of the world, another subject almost as trite as the manifold faults of women. This wail is uttered in a didactic poem addressed to his son, in which the worn father tries to convey some of the lessons of life, and to show the emptiness of all things, that all effort is vain, and the world is wholly bad. In short, Simonides is far from being an optimist. What we notice in him is rather the instructive, didactic tone of his writings, which is very different from the personal feeling and noteworthy vigor of Archilochus. A few other scattered fragments also convey the same impression. And it must be remembered in the consideration of all these lyric poets that we have to judge of nearly all from the smallest amount of testimony, for what is left is but the meagrest proportion of what existed. For centuries every feast in every city of Greece and its many colonies was celebrated in song; and this abundant production was but part; for what we may call the unofficial poetry, that which was expressive of the writer's own feelings and emotions, was quite as great in quantity. Much of it was naturally of only temporary interest and soon fell out of sight, especially when the later forms of composition, and especially the drama, became its successful rival. The lyric poetry may be said to have enjoyed unbroken popularity until about the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, and then to have lost ground. Much had been lost when the Alexandrian critics began to collect and edit the work of the earlier time, yet the amount that existed was enormous. Seneca tells us that Cicero said that, if he were to live two lives, he should be unable to read all the Greek lyric poets. While the Romans read the lyrics, they preferred the Alexandrian elegies, which have shared the same fate, and what was once an enormous collection is now scarcely more than a mass of ruins, and for chance lines we are often indebted to the wish of some grammarian to show us some rare or noteworthy

use of some phrase or word. Those who have survived most completely owe their escape from annihilation to the employment of their writings as text-books for children or to some lucky chance. Hosts of names are gone beyond all chance of recovery; only of Theognis and Pindar have we anything like a full text.



WOMEN CRUSHING CORN.



## CHAPTER II.—THE LYRIC POETS (*Continued*).

I.—Tyrtaeus, and His Patriotic Songs in Behalf of Sparta—In Contrast, the Amorous Wail of Mimnermus—Solon in Athens, as a Law-giver, and as a Writer of Elegies Mainly of Political Import. II.—The Melic Poetry, and its Connection with Music and Dance—The Growth of Music; the Different Divisions—Alcman, Alcæus, Sappho, Erinna, Stesichorus, Ibycus—Anacreon, and His Vast Popularity. III.—The Elegiac Poetry—Phocylides and His Inculcation of Reasonableness—Xenophanes and His Philosophical Exposition—Theognis and His Political Teachings—Simonides, His Longer Poems and His Epigrams—Bacchylides, Lasus, Myrtis, and the Predecessors of Pindar—Translations of Some Lyrical Poems.

### I.

THE variety of the subjects treated was very great. Ardent patriotism finds utterance in the work of Tyrtaeus, son of Archembrotus, who flourished in Sparta about 680 B.C. He was by birth an Athenian, and was invited to Sparta, so the story runs, in accordance with the command of the Delphian oracle at the time of the second Messenian war, for in Sparta the arts of refinement were so little cultivated that the country was obliged to import its poets, just as England and America get their musicians from Germany. Tyrtaeus at once received the right of citizenship, and devoted his talents to the service of his adopted home. Before his arrival, the war had been more than uncertain; the Spartans had suffered many defeats, but Tyrtaeus took charge of their forces and led them to victory. This was not his only service; besides winning fame as a general, he composed elegies and lyrical war-songs that filled the Spartans with patriotic enthusiasm. The elegies bore a great likeness to what is ascribed to Callinus, so much so, indeed, that the later poet has been credited with the long elegy of his predecessor. They are earnest appeals to the bravery of the Spartans; their main subject is a simple one—the glory of death for one's country. To die in the van fighting for home is the happiest fate that can befall a brave man. With this, in the first elegy, he compares the wretched existence of the coward who escapes and begs his bread from door to door, with father, mother, wife, and children. Such a man knows only misery; he never receives respect, pity, or honor; hence let us fight for our country, our children, our wives; let us not fear to die!

Let no one take flight! Especially let no young man run away. Those advanced in years may retreat, but it is disgraceful if an older man lies dead before a younger one, if the gray-haired veteran breathes his last in the dust. As Campbell translates it :

“Leave not our sires to stem the unequal fight,  
Whose limbs are nerved no more with buoyant might ;  
Nor, lagging backward, let the younger breast  
Permit the man of age (a sight unblest)  
To welter in the combat's foremost thrust,  
His hoary head dishevelled in the dust,  
And venerable bosom bleeding bare.  
But youth's fair form, though fallen, is ever fair,  
And beautiful in death the boy appears,  
The hero boy, that dies in blooming years :  
In man's regret he lives, and woman's tears ;  
More sacred than in life, and lovelier far,  
For having perished in the front of war.”

This exaltation of the immortal beauty of the youth dead in battle is a peculiarly Greek touch, and it had appeared in Homer. Callinus, too, had already said that a hero, when he died, left the whole people to mourn him, and, living, is likened to the demigods; but here, for Campbell's version alters the Greek directness, the youth who, when living, is admired by men and loved by women, is beautiful even falling in the foremost line.

In the next elegy, once more the Spartans are urged to bravery, and the exact method of fighting is described. He mentions, too, the varying fortunes of the Spartan armies, now victorious, now beaten.

The third elegy celebrates the importance of bravery, and the insignificance of every other form of merit in comparison with it. Strength, speed, beauty, wealth, power, eloquence, fame of any other kind, are as nothing if the man have not bravery, if he be not bold in fight, and dare not look grim death in the eye, and do not aim at the opposing foe. This is virtue, this is the highest gain for man, an honor for him and a blessing for the city and all its inhabitants, when a man stands firm in the foremost rank and thinks not of flight. If he falls, he and his whole race become famous; if he survives, he receives every honor.

Tyrtæus also wrote a political elegy, the *Eunomia*, or Sound Government, as we may call it, of which unfortunately only little is left us, the longest fragment consisting of only ten lines. It seems from these to have been a historical sketch of the past of the Spartan state, and to have contained much political instruction for the time at which it was written, about the 35th Olympiad. The author's aim was to encourage the firmness of the Spartans by recounting their early

struggles and glories and the varying fortunes of their war with the Messenians. It is much to be regretted that we have not the whole poem, which was perhaps the very first in which historical description and political reflection found expression in Greek literature. There was this advantage for Sparta in having no literary past, that Tyrtæus had free ground in which to work.

One other form of composition that he employed was that of martial songs. The Spartans had for a long time charged in battle with the accompaniment of music; later they had used songs adapted to these melodies, and it was songs of this sort that Tyrtæus wrote. The longest fragment ran something like this:

March on, ye soldiers of Sparta,  
Ye children of noble fathers,  
On your left arm holding your shields,  
Swinging your lances with boldness,  
Without regard for your lives,  
For such is the custom in Sparta.

Very different from the patriotic vigor of Tyrtæus is the pensive, amorous strain of Mimnermus of Colophon in Ionja, who flourished a very little later than the Spartan poet. In the Ionic colonies life was easy and sweet; they were the home of luxury and refinement, and in the absence of political independence—for Colophon had fallen under Lydian control—men's minds naturally turned to the enjoyment of the present. Mimnermus is said to have been a flute-player, and thus to have been naturally led to elegiac composition; his method was determined by the interests of his surroundings. It is said that the inspiration of his poetry was his love for the female flute-player Nanno, and his poems about her were a model for the later writers of love-songs. He was regarded as the originator of the love-elegy, but too little of his work is left to enable us to decide about the method of his treatment. In the fragments that remain we find his constant lamentations over the brevity of youth. He bids his hearers to gather rosebuds while they may, to make the best use of their short playing-time, for the gods grant no return of strength and youth. Certainly no contrast is more vivid than that between Tyrtæus's command to the young to die in battle and Mimnermus's soft injunctions to them to make the most of their tender years and to enjoy all the pleasures that life can give. What Mimnermus denounces is not cowardice, but simply old age—he must have been well on in years when he wrote, for youth is sweetest when it is gone; the young know its bitterness too well—and he chose his sixtieth year as the age at which he wished to die. Doubtless he lived to be much older.

Mimnermus did not confine himself to these lighter subjects, how-



ever; he wrote also about the establishment of the Ionic colonies on the coast of Asia Minor and of their struggles with their neighbors, but it was the expression of his own feelings that gave him his name.

Just as the poems of Tyrtaeus make clear to us the affairs of Sparta at the time of the second Messenian War, and those of Mimnermus expose the voluptuousness of the Ionic colonies, so do those of their contemporary, Solon, throw light upon an important part of Athenian history, and afford us the first example of Athenian literature. While Sparta was contesting for military supremacy, and colonies in Asia Minor were declining into oriental luxury, Athens was laying the foundations of its future political and intellectual supremacy. Here, however, as elsewhere, we regret the meagreness of the material that is left to us, and while we have of Solon much more than of both the others, it is true, as Grote has said, that "there is hardly anything more to be deplored amid the lost treasures of the Grecian mind than the poems of Solon; for we see by the remaining fragments that they contained notices of the public and social phenomena before him, which he was compelled attentively to study, blended with the touching expression of his own personal feelings in the poet, alike honorable and difficult, to which the confidence of his countrymen had exalted him." Solon was above all things a statesman who conveyed political instruction through his elegies, and his importance to the Athenian state is well known; it was not a matter of indifference to him who made the laws if he made the songs. He was born at about the time of the 35th Olympiad, of a good family; but poverty fortunately compelled him to travel about on business, and his roving life brought him into communication with the most celebrated men of his day. When he returned to Athens, he made himself conspicuous by his efforts to recover Salamis, for so long as that island remained in the possession of Megara it was impossible for Athens to develop into a seaport. Plutarch tells us that the Athenians forbade any renewal of the proposal to capture Salamis, but that Solon, in his indignation, pretended to be mad, and, appearing suddenly in the market-place, recited his elegy on Salamis to a great concourse of the people; of this poem but a few lines have been spared, wherein he bids his fellow-citizens to rise and fight for the lovely isle of Salamis. The success of this ruse made him conspicuous; but his fame was most firmly established when he was made archon, and granted extraordinary powers for the revision of the Athenian constitution. It was during his lifetime, and in great measure as a result of his intelligent direction, that the foundations of the future greatness of Athens were laid. What especially concerns us here is the reflection of his political wisdom in his poetry, which was the vehicle he chose for the expression

of his solicitude for his countrymen. What we notice is his temperate wisdom. Without partisanship he directed the hot political interests of the Athenians, holding a middle course between the aristocratic and radical extremes, yet not allying himself with the intermediate party, and securing the respect of all. He seems, too, to have perceived the impotence of laws that did not rest upon the deliberate decision of the people; and, like the other seven sages, as they were called, he did his best to establish a sound ethical core in the hearts of his countrymen. Thus in the longest piece of his work, the only one that has reached us in a complete form, he begins with the wish that Zeus and the Muses will hear his prayers, and grant him blessings and happiness from the gods and reputation among men. Then he goes on to say that only what is honestly acquired is of benefit, that unholy earnings remain for but a short time. Even if the divine Nemesis seems to delay or to overlook wrong-doing, it is sure to overtake the evil-doer at last, and although he may himself escape, his children or his children's children will suffer. "Zeus seeth all things, and like a wind scattering the clouds, which shakes the deep places of the tumultuous sea and rages over the fertile land, and rises at last to heaven, the home of the gods, and makes the sky clear, whereupon the sun bursts forth in glory, and the clouds are gone—such is the vengeance of Zeus." Let no one then judge from the present alone or indulge in foolish hopes. Yet such is human nature; the coward deems himself a hero; the ill-favored imagines that he is beautiful. Whatever a man's occupation—and Solon gives a line or two, to describing the diverse occupations of his contemporaries: the mariner, the husbandman, the artisan, the seer, the physician—the issue lies in the hands of the gods; all our pains may be of no avail, and our foolish actions may bring us rich reward. The elegy then concludes with saying that all our efforts are for wealth, which is often ruinous, and we blindly overlook the perils with which Zeus has involved its possession.

This lesson, which is as true and as necessary here to-day as it was in Greece six centuries before Christ, is one that other thoughtful teachers there, as elsewhere, have never been tired of preaching to men who have seen in wealth the one great power of the world. In the case of Solon it had a genuine significance, and was far from being the wail of a hopelessly impoverished moralist whose denunciation of riches is mere regret for their absence; he had modified the constitution by substituting property for birth as the basis of representation, and thus he recognized and approved the new importance of material prosperity; but he sought to control it and to keep it subordinate to uprightness. There is scarcely one of the sages who does not denounce ill-gotten gain. Theognis expressed the same sentiments and foretold



the sure, though possibly delayed, wrath of Zeus. He who acquires wealth honorably will keep it; he who grows rich by injustice or covetousness, though at first it may seem to be of advantage, will find it turn to ashes. Men are deceived, however, because the gods do not always punish the crime the moment that it is committed; one man pays in person, another leaves misfortune to fall upon his children, a third escapes justice by death.

This utterance regarding the certainty of punishment is something that all mankind has at all times been ready to see, at least with regard to others' sins; it is a frequent saying in early Chinese literature; among the Asiatics it became the main principle of Buddhism, which established a rigid debit and credit account of human actions, and is now among civilized races, under the guise of heredity, receiving careful scientific examination, such as awaits every human thought and action. To the more thoughtful Greeks of this time the vicissitudes of life appeared to be the direct acts of jealous and revengeful deities. Life was above all things uncertain, "No mortal is wholly happy, all upon whom the sun shines are wretched," Solon said, Yet although the wicked flourish and the upright suffer, we would not exchange with them, or barter virtue for wealth, for virtue is a lasting possession, and wealth slips from one man to another. Elsewhere he says that the man with much silver and gold, and who owns large estates, is no richer than he who has just enough, for no one can take his superfluous wealth to the grave or buy exemption from death, disease, or old age. In all of these poems we notice the pensiveness of a man who sees the complexity of life.

Much of his poetry is devoted to conveying sound political instruction; thus in an elegy on Athens, in which he begins by declaring that city to be under the special charge of the gods, and that Pallas will never desert it, he goes on to show how the citizens alone can accomplish its ruin by their misdeeds, and he ends by warning them to abandon evil ways and to seek righteousness. Other fragments teach the same lesson.

In general what we have left of the work of Solon, incomplete as it is, indicates the turmoil of change and the introduction of new conditions of life. The city of Athens as we see it portrayed in his elegies, presents a picture of factional disturbance which had to be allayed and unified by tyranny and foreign war. The strong rule of the tyrants had its good results in their encouragement of art and letters, and in Solon's manly utterances we may detect an early indication of the warlike spirit which was afterwards to do so much for Greece. In the awkwardness of his execution we may notice the lingering of old conditions that had been outgrown elsewhere, for literary movements

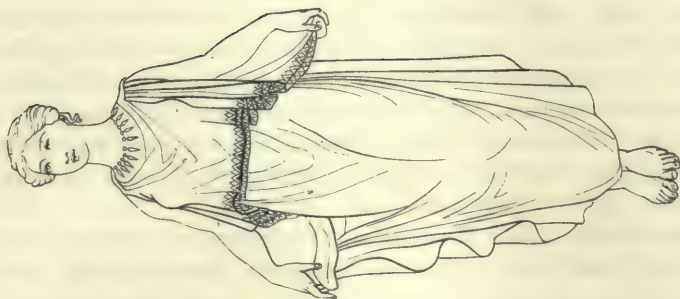


are as irregular as isothermal lines, and the freedom of the Athenians protected them from the overripe cultivation that is expressed by Mimnermus and others.

Indeed, the study of these bits of the early Athenian literature suffices to show that here at least the whole force of the people was something that awaited a later time to show its full development. Its very crudity is capable of indicating promise; the perfect possession of literary powers might have foretold decay rather than greater performance.

While the elegy had thus been growing up in various parts of Greece, especially in the Ionic colonies and in Athens, what was called the *melic* poetry had begun and advanced to equal importance among the Doric races. To define melic poetry as lyric would not be exact, because it would omit an important component of the melic verse, to wit, its relation to music. As matters stand, we have but a mere fragment left from which to construct one of the most important parts of Greek literature, and it would be exactly as possible to reconstruct a modern opera from the text as it is for us to form a definite notion of the melic poetry from the scraps of verse that alone survive. Of Pindar alone do we possess a tolerably complete collection, but what we have of his work is far from covering the whole ground, for there were many developments of this form of composition which he did not touch. The great variety of the melic poetry expressed countless individual and local differences, yet, unlike modern lyric poetry, it was not primarily an expression of personal feeling for which the poet could choose whatever form of utterance best suited him; it was not a modification of popular poetry, as we understand the phrase, but rather the secularization of forms that were connected with religious pomp and ceremony, from which poets derived a good part of their models. The epic modulated itself into the elegy, the descriptive parts of the earlier verse falling away in favor of the personal utterances, after a fashion which we see going on about us in the modern epic, the novel, wherein description holds every year a less important place than the study of character, a change from the general to the particular which is an inevitable accompaniment of every form of growth. The iambic verse, as we see it in Archilochus, remained most completely the favorite method of expression for ridicule or discussion, and although it was accompanied by music, the author and composer were different persons. This form, which became the dramatic as distinguished from the choral part of the plays, never attained among the Greeks the general importance of the melic poetry. In this form the three arts of music, poetry, and dance were combined in an impressive whole. The contests in gymnastics, song, and dance were held

under religious auspices, and maintained their solemnity and importance by the speedy adaptations of what was already established in the sacred rites. These ceremonies thus rendered great service to what speedily became an important part of the literary development. It is this close connection between the words and the music which is lost for us. The various festal occasions encouraged the growth of orchestral dancing in Sparta, where the musical and poetic impulse was slighter than elsewhere, so that these two aids to the delight of men were brought in by Terpander of Lesbos, who introduced the seven-string harp in the place of an inferior instrument. In poetry he further developed the already existing *nomos*, or hieratic poem, into a more complicated form, which he accompanied with music. He had various successors, Kapon, Clonas, Polymnestus, Sakadas, and Echembrotus, whose names are about all that we know of them. The next step was the growth of the *pæan*, which was distinguished from the *nomos* by being sung by a chorus instead of a single performer. The *nomos* consisted mainly of hexameters, singly or in combination with the pentameter; now we find more complex forms. It was in the hands of Thaletas that this change seems to have taken place. His date was about the 28th Olympiad, and some of the modifications which he wrought were already familiar in his home, the island of Crete. Xenodamus and Xenopritos are the names of two of his successors. A third was Alcman, of whom alone fragments have reached us, but what fragments! They are almost without exception nothing but the merest scraps that owe their preservation to the fact that a line here or a line there was quoted by some grammarian in later times to illustrate some matter of which he happened to be treating. It was from these widely scattered sources that the industry of modern editors has rescued many of the most valuable of the gems of Greek literature. Yet just where we want more we have but a few words, only fortunate in that any thing is spared to us. The bits of Alcman are marked with extreme simplicity; thus he says: "And created three seasons, summer, winter and autumn, and the fourth was spring, when every thing blooms, but there is not enough to eat," a touch that describes the period of the year before the new crops are gathered with more vividness than do purely picturesque epithets. Elsewhere, he says that he is contented with simple fare, such as the common people eat. Indeed, he is fond of talking about himself; he boasts that he is no rustic boor, no Thessalian, but that he is sprung from lofty Sardis. The odd lines that belong to him attest great variety in the use of metres, which, however, are naturally less complicated than those of later times. He was the first of what may be called the classic lyric poets, and for more than two centuries his work



DANCING GIRLS.



lived in the memory of the Greeks; and even when his fame was diminished by new candidates for the popular favor he was by no means forgotten. One of the few fragments of any length may be read in the following translation:

"Stillness upon the mountain-heads and deep abysses,  
The cliffs of ocean and each gloomy cave;  
And quiet reigns throughout the craggy forests,  
Where fiercest, wildest beasts are wont to rave!  
All living things upon this dark earth nourished,  
Even the swarms of busy bees, are still;  
In purple depths of ocean sleep sea-monsters,  
And merry winged birds forget to trill."

Certainly one does not associate verse of this sort with ancient Sparta; yet even Sparta was a part of Greece, and after its success in the Messenian War it enjoyed a short breathing-time, in which it saw that life had other charms than perpetual military drill. But its flowering time was short, and probably the tender touches of Alcman soon sank into insignificance by the side of the martial spirit of Tyrtæus. Poetry soon sought another home outside of Sparta.

Of Arion we know scarcely more than that our knowledge of him is very scanty. He is said to have perfected the dithyramb, a song in honor of Dionysus, but his work, like that of the contemporaries of Alcman, has long since perished.

While the Dorians had thus been developing the melic poetry, it has been shown that they derived the impetus from without. Terpan-der came from Lesbos, and it was in this island that the art now reached its highest perfection. Mitylene, the principal city of Lesbos, had attained considerable importance by its commerce, and with wealth



ALCÆUS.  
(Lesbian Coin.)

there had come the opportunity for intellectual growth. It was under these favoring conditions that the melic poetry of the Lesbians flourished. The two important names are those of Alcæus and Sappho, who were contemporaries of Solon. In the work of Alcæus we see reflected the distracted political condition of the island; he was an adherent of the nobles, who were in conflict with the populace, and at first an admirer of Pittacus, who afterwards seized the reins of gov-

ernment and won the poet's hatred. Alcæus was banished, but afterwards, although he took up arms against the tyrant, he was forgiven, and was permitted to return to Lesbos, where he became reconciled to the new conditions. Yet he is a complete representative of the older

spirit of chivalry that survived longer among the Æolians than elsewhere, and he expressed his opinions with distinctness and vigor. The frequent references of the later writers of antiquity attest this, and his comparison of the state to a ship soon became, what it has remained, one of the commonplaces of literary allusion. Yet there is nothing commonplace in the fragment that contains the comparison. "I cannot understand the direction of the wind; waves come rolling in from all directions; we are carried amongst them in the dark ship, struggling with the fierce tempest. The hull is leaking; the sails are torn and hanging in shreds; the anchors are dragging." Thus he described the civic disturbances, taking an image that was familiar to the seafaring Lesbians. We know that he served as a soldier, and in another fragment we have an incomplete account of his equipment; his house, he tells us, shimmers with brass; the whole building is adorned, in honor of the god of war, with brilliant helmets, from which float the white horsetails, ornaments for the heads of warriors; on hidden pegs hang shining greaves, a protection against the strong dart; new cuirasses of linen and hollow shields are placed about, with Chalcidian swords and many tunics and jerkins. He sang of hospitality as well as military life. One fragment is interesting because Horace has translated it almost word for word in the ninth ode of the first book. "The rain is pouring, there is a fierce storm outside; the streams are frozen, . . . drive out the winter, heap wood on the fire, mixing a draught of wine with a generous hand, and wrap your head in soft wool." There are other traces of the work of Alcæus in Horace, little as we have of the poems of the Greek poet, and perhaps it is not fanciful to detect in both a community of interest in political matters and in the pleasures of life. What Alcæus lacked, from the comparative insignificance of the civil strife in a small Greek island, is more than made up by his being first in the field. The strong political interests of the Æolians rendered them unsusceptible to the formal compositions of the Dorians, which rested on an established order of things, and the Lesbian luxury suggested the praise of pleasure. Alcæus did not neglect this subject; but Sappho, his contemporary, far excelled him here. Alcæus wrote a number of odes to the gods, and as it were, covered the ground in various directions; but Sappho in a single field, the love song, sounded a note that has ever won the highest praise for grace and vividness. The ancients entitled her the poetess, as they called Homer the poet. Aristotle quoted a statement that made her the equal of Homer and Archilochus, Plato styled her the tenth muse, and it will be noticed that it is not with other women that she is compared.

Of Sappho's life and character various conflicting accounts have

come down to us. Her exceptional eminence appears to have made her the object of an extraordinary amount of abuse in later times when men had lost their appreciation or comprehension of a civilization different from their own, and the freedom that women had enjoyed among the Æolians became synonymous with unbridled license in the minds of later Attic comedians, who lived in a state of society wherein women were caged as in the East. Moreover, the impossibility of their



SAPPHO.  
(From the bronze of Herculaneum.)

turning current events and prominent contemporaries to ridicule exposed distinguished persons of the past to every form of contempt. Such at least is the defense that is offered against the many calumnies, as they are called, that have gathered about her name. Whatever may have been her character or her habits, there is no division of opinion regarding the quality of her writing, for every one who has read the few lines she has left has fallen under the charm of her wonderful verse. It is not unmeaning rapture, but mere description, to say of it that it has the rare stamp of perfection in its compact beauty and vivid accuracy. It would be a small volume that should hold only the very best lines ever written, and it would contain many of hers that have



come down to us in pieces, like the extracts in Johnson's Dictionary, rent from their context, mere scraps and shreds, yet quivering with the emotion of a sensitive, rich nature. Her works survived until certainly the third century of our era, and probably much later, and then they succumbed, not to the ordinary accidents of time or to general indifference, but to the violent hatred of men in authority, who looked on the songs of Greek lyric poets as the Puritans looked on plays. At some undetermined time they were burned by official order, and, it is said, the poems of Gregory Nazianzen were circulated in their stead. We are not told how even an imperial government enforced this part of their literary despotism.

The date of Sappho is about 610 B.C. Of her life scarcely anything authoritative is known beyond the fact that she was a native of Lesbos. In the islands of the *Ægean*, Greek culture, or, more exactly, the *Æolian* culture, flourished for a brief season with a greater fervency than it did anywhere at the time on the mainland. Possibly the problems of the swiftly growing civilization were more readily solved in the comparative isolation of these insular towns, with their handful of inhabitants, than where the numbers were greater and more perplexed by various aims and feelings. At any rate the lyric passion that inspired the songs of the *Æolians* burned with greater brilliancy and keener personal fervor than in other parts of Greece, where it was utilized for the furtherance of patriotism or social virtue. With them it was pure song, while among the Dorians, their only rivals, one sees the traces of the spirit that was helping to form a great state. In both, however, the melic poetry was the direct expression of an important period, one of change between the heroic age and that of the greatest brilliancy of Greece, after the Persian wars; and then the melic poetry was lost in the glory of the drama, which was built up on its variety and earnestness. The difference between the two sorts of poetry will be noticed as well as the points of likeness; the drama belonged to the whole people, but the melic poetry was the possession of men who had not yet attained what we may call national ideas. Especially, as has been said, is this true of the *Æolians*.

In the bits of Sappho's work that are left us we feel most intensely the nature of the poet. The translations, however careful and exact, are pallid by the side of the unequalled original; yet even in them we may find a trace of the original charm. Thus:

"Evening, thou bringest all that light-bringing morning hath scattered; thou bringest the sheep, thou bringest the goat, thou bringest the child to the mother."

This fragment, it will be remembered, was imitated and enlarged by Byron in one of the stanzas (CVII.) at the end of the third canto

of Don Juan, where he, as it were, tries to show how many stops he has to his flute. This is his rendering :

"O Hesperus ! thou bringest all good things—  
 Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,  
 To the young bird the parent's brooding wings,  
 The welcome stall to the o'erlabour'd steer.  
 Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone clings,  
 Whate'er our household gods protect of dear,  
 Are gather'd round us by thy look of rest ;  
 Thou brings't the child, too, to the mother's breast."

No better example of the difference between the best work of the ancients and the common qualities of the moderns could be found than this. Sappho says what she has to say with absolute directness and simplicity, without a superfluous word, with no trace of artifice; and Byron lets the two lines of the original grow into eight, in which rhyme and a long complicated stanza enforce the statement, which is already burthened by such additional statements as that the steer was o'erlabored. Moreover, the two lines,

"Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone clings,  
 Whate'er our household gods protect of dear,"

are exactly in the line of modern workmanship; we have no household gods, and only know them as literary creations; yet we should be wretched without them; poetry without conventionalities would be very baffling and strange.

What appears in these two lines of Sappho is the constant mint-mark, as here again :

"As the sweet-apple blushes on the end of the bough, the very end of the bough, which the gatherers overlooked, nay, overlooked not, but could not reach."

And this :

"As on the hills the shepherds trample the hyacinth under foot and the purple flower [is pressed] to earth."

These two bits were welded together by D. G. Rossetti in this version :

#### I.

"Like the sweet apple which reddens upon the topmost bough,  
 A-top on the topmost twig,—which the pluckers forgot somehow,—  
 Forgot it not, nay, but got it not, for none could get it till now."

#### II.

"Like the wild hyacinth flower which on the hills is found,  
 Which the passing feet of the shepherds for ever tear and wound,  
 Until the purple blossom is trodden into the ground."

The English version next given offers but a faint description rather than a representation of the Greek:

"The moon has set, and the Pleiades; it is midnight, the time is going by, and I sleep alone."

Elsewhere what in the original is a cry, is turned into a mere statement by translation, as here:

"Men I think will remember us even hereafter."

And here:

"And round about the cool [water] gurgles through apple-boughs, and slumber streams from quivering leaves,"

when possibly breeze should be read rather than water, for often even the fragments come to us in fragments.

Only two of her poems reach us complete or in any length. One of them is thus admirably rendered by Thomas Wentworth Higginson:



APHRODITE IN  
CHARIOT.

"Beautiful-throned, immortal Aphrodite,  
Daughter of Zeus, beguiler, I implore thee,  
Weigh me not down with weariness and anguish,  
O thou most holy!

Come to me now, if ever thou in kindness  
Hearkenedst my words,—and often hast thou hearkened—  
Heeding, and coming from the mansions golden  
Of thy great Father,

Yoking thy chariot, borne by thy most lovely  
Consecrated birds, with dusky-tinted pinions,  
Waving swift wings from utmost height of heaven  
Through the mid-ether;

Swiftly they vanished, leaving thee, O goddess,  
Smiling with face immortal in its beauty,  
Asking why I grieved, and why in utter longing  
I had dared call thee;

Asking what I sought, thus hopeless in desiring,  
Wildered in brain, and spreading net of passion—  
Alas, for whom? and saidst thou, 'Who has harmed thee?'  
'O my poor Sappho!

'Though now he flies, ere long he shall pursue thee;  
'Fearing thy gifts, he too in turn shall bring them;  
'Loveless to-day, to-morrow he shall woo thee,  
'Though thou shouldst spurn him.'

Thus seek me now, O holy Aphrodite!  
Save me from anguish; give me all I ask for;  
Gifts at thy hand; and thine shall be the glory,  
Sacred Protector!"



The other has not come to us in a complete state, but more fully than the rest; here is a literal translation :

“That man seems to me peer of the gods, who sits in thy presence, and hears close to him thy sweet speech and lovely laughter ; that indeed makes my heart flutter in my bosom. For when I see thee but a little, I have no utterance left, my tongue is broken down, and straightway a subtle fire has run under my skin, with my eyes I have no sight, my ears ring, sweat bathes me, and a trembling seizes all my body ; I am paler than grass, and seem in my madness little better than one dead. But I must dare all, since one so poor——”

The measures that she used were various; the most common, and the one that bears her name, the Sapphic, may be seen in Mr. Higginson's rendering above. While the amount that we have of her work is so little, it is more than probable that much of it is translated in Catullus's poems. So much at least may be said of the epithalamia or wedding-songs, yet many other kinds are spoken of with admiration by the ancients, such as epigrams, elegies, iambics, monodies, and hymns. Of odes she is said to have composed nine books, and some of these are thought to have been directly translated by Horace.

While Sappho was thus readily first among the women who composed poetry at this time, it is known that she had many companions and rivals in this art and the accompanying music, although none of these attained anything at all comparable with her eminence. Yet, of the other women, one whose name has survived is Erinna, not an Æolian, but an inhabitant of the Dorian island of Telos. The statement that she was one of the circle that surrounded Sappho seems to rest on but faint authority. We are told of her that she composed a poem of moderate length in hexameters, combining the new grace of Sappho with the long-established qualities of the epic writers. A few of her poems have been gathered into the Anthology. Her date is extremely uncertain.

Another famous name is that of Stesichorus of Himera, who flourished between 630 and 550 B.C. His family is said to have come from a Locrian colony in Sicily. One tradition indeed asserted that he was a son of Hesiod, which may also be interpreted as meaning that he had some close relation with the Hesiodic school of poetry. Yet the meagre crumbs that are left of the twenty-six books of his poetry do not give us the means to form a definite opinion concerning his work, and there is little left for us to do except to record the verdict of antiquity. This especially praised the Homeric quality to be found in his lyrical treatment of the old myths. It appears that he took his material from many varied sources ; he treated the story of

the Argonaut, and the Theban and Trojan myths, following Hesiod and the cyclic poets, or other authorities, as seemed best. There are some indications that in a poem on the destruction of Troy he mentioned the Italiote tradition of Æneas's wanderings. With what a free hand he treated the old myths we can see from the three opening lines of his ode on Helen, which run thus: "That story is not true; you did not sail away in the well-oared ship; you did not go to the Trojan town." The tradition runs that he had composed a poem in which he had spoken slightly of the heroine, who revenged herself by making him blind; she was, however, mollified by this recantation



THE FLIGHT OF ÆNEAS.  
(From a Black Vase painting.)

and freed him of his affliction. A similar story, it is curious to note, is told of an Icelandic Skald, who, in a spirit of mistaken economy, sent the same complimentary song to two different girls. The conception of an unreal Helen is ascribed to Hesiod; and the whole disposition to alter the myths is a proof that they had lost some of their original authority, or at least that there were varying authorities for the same story that came to the light in the general growth of Greek civilization. What was yet more novel, for we have no means of deciding the extent to which the cyclic poets modified the Homeric myths, was the complicated form which he gave to his lyric exposition of epic subjects. Recitation was, as we have seen, succeeded by musical rendering, and to the strophe and antistrophe he added the epode, thus bringing the lyrical form to the perfection in which it was used by Pindar and the tragedians.

Ibycus, a native of Rhegium, who flourished a trifle later than Stesichorus, passed his life at the court of Polycrates of Samos. An important part of his work seems to have been a treatment of mythical subjects like that of Stesichorus, and some pieces have been assigned to both at different times; the greater part, however, was love-poetry, in which he followed the famous Æolian lyric writers. We have too little of his verse left to judge of his merit, but in antiquity his reputation was high.

These fragments may perhaps illustrate some of his traits :

Oh ! cherished darling of the bright-haired graces,  
 Euryalus, sweet, blue-eyed youth !  
 Both gentle-eyed Persuasion 'mid the roses,  
 And Venus nurtured you in truth.

Once more do Love's dark eyes gaze into mine,  
 With melting glances, and he me beguiles  
 To Aphrodite's net, with charming wiles ;  
 Yet at his coming doth my heart repine,  
 As an old race-horse trembles, drawing near  
 The course where erst he won the victory dear,  
 And weak with age the contest would decline.

Anacreon was another poet who also lived at the court of Polycrates, and apparently at the same time with Ibycus, although we have no information on which to base an opinion. Anacreon was born in the Ionian city of Teos. His life was one of vicissitude. Teos was conquered by the Persians at the beginning of their advance; its inhabitants abandoned their old home and betook themselves to Abdera in Thrace, whence Anacreon went to Samos in compliance with an invitation of Polycrates. Just how many years he remained with his powerful friend is not known, but it was probably soon after the fall of the tyrant that he went to Athens. This city was already a home of refinement, and doubtless afforded him sympathetic society. Indeed Hipparchus of Athens is said to have sent a ship to bring the poet to his new home, which was vying with other places in tempting men of genius to reside within its walls. What became of him after the murder of Hipparchus is not known, and is for us unimportant. The story of his life is valuable as showing the growing interest and jealous rivalry of different cities in behalf of literary cultivation. Naturally enough, men who are much sought after soon adapt themselves to what they readily think are very proper conditions, and Anacreon sang the praises of love and wine as readily in one court as in another. This facility is remarkable, but the reader is more struck with his literary skill than by more genuine qualities. Where Sappho, for instance,



appears sincere, Anacreon seems accomplished; he is the master of many forms; he lent literary refinement to the old popular poetry of the Ionians, and became a model for future singers. His very smoothness leaves us untouched. His conviviality was cold and deliberate;



ANACREON.

with five parts of wine he tells us that he was accustomed to take ten parts of water, and this dilution affects his poetry. Prudence, however commendable, does not inspire poetical enthusiasm, and a man whose bitterest grief is that gray hairs will render him unlovely

can scarcely awaken profound sympathy. Anacreon sang such subjects with untiring grace, but without passion, and without mention of what was serious in his life.

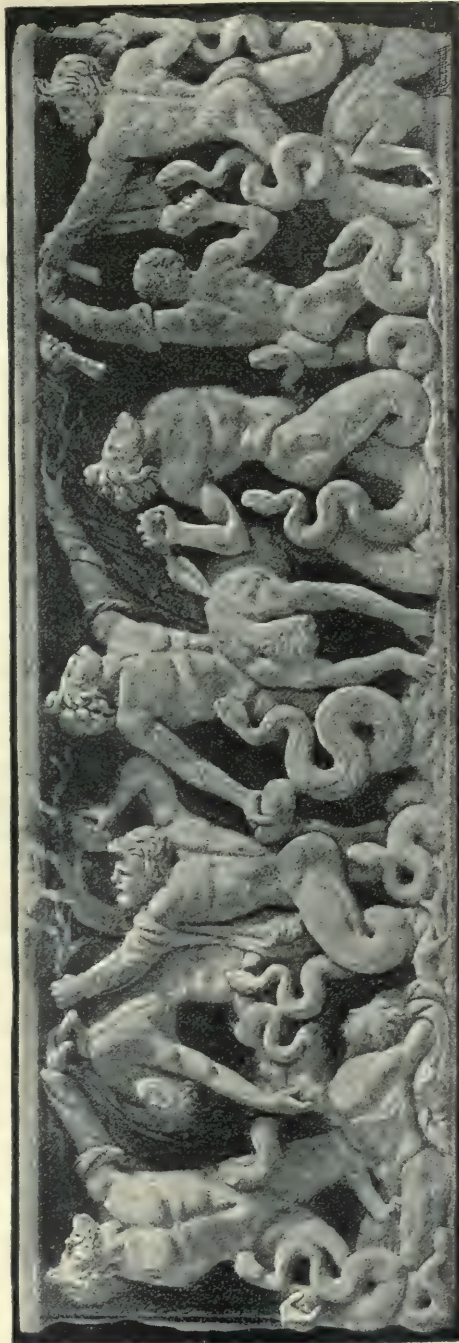
It was this literary excellence which inspired admiration and imitation in later times, for real feeling eludes the skill of the copyist, who may yet learn any verbal trick; and while the best men defy artificial rivalry, those whose main charm is technical skill are sure to be complimented by others who try to do the same thing more cleverly. Anacreon early received this attention, and many Anacreontic songs, since lost, were written at an early day. Others, composed in the fourth century of our era, for a time aroused great admiration among the moderns; it was these that Thomas Moore translated, and it is this fictitious Anacreon who stood for a representative Greek lyric poet at the revival of Greek studies towards the end of the last century. Men are always ready to prefer third-rate work to what is really excellent, and it is only gradually that the best part of Greek literature, as of other literatures, has attained its proper place.

### III.

While the melic poetry had been growing, the elegiac poetry, with its lessons of wisdom, had not been neglected. Phocylides of Miletus was one who chose this measure and wrote a number of proverbial sayings, a few of which have come down to us. He appears to have flourished about the 60th Olympiad, or 540 B.C. The fragments indicate very moderate poetic ability; indeed, their quality almost compelled the speedy introduction of prose, for the contrast between the melic verse with its marvellous charm, and the arid severity of many of the elegiacs, is most striking. The prosaic quality called for congenial prose. In one piece that survives, he repeats the old legend that one woman is descended from the dog, another from the bee, others from the pig and the horse. Elsewhere, he asks of what use is nobility unaccompanied by kindness in heart or deed. Again, he urges that young men be accustomed to honorable things. His lessons are true, but they do not lack obviousness. The recommendation that men first seek a competence and then virtue, outdoes Franklin at his worst, but violent condemnation of it, without knowing the context, would be unwise. One thing is certain, the ancients much admired Phocylides, and Aristotle quotes with admiration his statement that the middle classes are in many respects the best off, and that he should like to be in the middle rank in a state. He also said: "A small city, built upon a rock, and well governed, is better than Nineveh in its madness," which is a clear expres-

sion of the Greek interest in separate small cities, and of their noncomprehension of federal union. All that they demanded was moderate size and sound government.

Xenophanes, a native of Colophon, who is better known as the founder of the Eleatic school of philosophy, has left some verses that present a different view of life from that of Phocylides. Instead of practical wisdom, he praises the intellectual simplicity of the Ionic race, endeavoring to show its superiority to the cultivation of physical qualities that were made so much of by the rest of the Greeks. Thus he says that whoever wins in a foot-race, boxing, wrestling, or chariot race, receives all kinds of honors, precedence at festivals, a purse of money, and public support. This is his reward, even if the horses have done it. "Yet he is of less value than I; my wisdom is better than the strength of horses or men. All this is foolish, it is not proper to prefer strength to wisdom. Of what use is all this physical skill? It secures no better government. The delight of winning a contest is a



STRIFE OF THE GIANTS.  
(Sarcophagus relief, beneath the sleeping Ariadne of the Vatican.)



brief one, and in no way helps to fill the granaries of a city." In another elegy he describes the proper conditions of what seems remote when we call it a banquet, but is familiar to us as a dinner—flowers, agreeable perfumes, wine, and fresh waters, brown bread, cheese, and honey, await the guests, who begin the meal with song and prayer and the wish to attain justice. They shall not drink to excess, but shall converse about virtue and honor, not about the fights of the Titans and giants, and the Centaurs, the fancies of former generations, which are of no use, while it is always well to have respect for the good that the gods have done.

Not only is this poem interesting as a statement of the moderation and intellectual interest of a cultivated Greek; it also serves to illustrate one side of the poet which is otherwise only known to us by tradition, namely, his incredulity concerning the antiquated mythology of the Greeks. He wrote a long poem, of a philosophical nature, in which he is said—for the poem has not come down to us—to have expressed his belief in a single god, and a trace of his thought appears in this elegy. Certainly, the Greek mind at this time was far from slumbering in inaction when statesmen, soldiers, philosophers, and courtiers rivalled one another in the composition of verse. The philosophical poems of Xenophanes, it may be added, had long-lived influence; his success in treating the subject in verse made that an authorized conventional form for the expression of philosophic speculation for both Greek and Latin writers, and from them it descended to modern men, who continued the habit, with varying success, or rather with unvarying ill-success, until the end of the last century. Yet the mention of interest in philosophy brings us dangerously near the beginnings of prose, and it is necessary first to treat of some of the great poets who have not yet been mentioned.

One of these is Theognis, a contemporary of Phocylides, and like him a writer of elegies. There is this important difference, however, that while we have but a few lines of Phocylides, there remain very nearly fourteen hundred verses of Theognis. The fullness of this collection is doubtless due in good measure to the value placed upon these poems as a means of instruction for youth. The compilation of moral saws includes, however, more than the poems of Theognis. References may be found to events too widely distant to be included in one man's life, and poems of Solon, Tyrtaeus, and others are in the collection, sometimes as separate pieces, sometimes detached lines are imbedded in one of Theognis's pieces. From the collection various attempts have been made to write the author's life, and some industrious critics have built up a record of his actions which rivals in completeness the recent biographical accumulation that has grown up about

Goethe. Other, more industrious, critics decline to accept these minute statements which are built upon scanty references that are found here and there in the poems. It at least appears that Theognis was a native of Megara in Greece, that he belonged to the old aristocratic party which had held power for a long time. But the contrast between the wealth of the few and the poverty of the many excited revolt; the populace rose successfully, banished the aristocracy, and confiscated their estates. Theognis suffered with the nobles and shared their exile, being welcomed in Eubœa, Sicily, and Sparta by those who agreed with his political sentiments. At length he returned to Megara, where he lived in poverty, trying to reconcile himself to the change in affairs.

The poems that incontestably belong to Theognis were addressed to a young friend, Kyrnus, whom he endeavored to instruct in political matters. The relation between the two appears to have been almost that of teacher and pupil, for Theognis built up nearly a complete system of political advice in which the elder draws many lessons from his varied experience. He continually called the nobles *the good*, and ordinary citizens *the bad*, with which we may compare the later use of *great* and *vulgar*, employing these terms not merely as vague definitions, but with a distinct sense of their accuracy. The poems were written after the author's return to Megara, and he cannot conceal his surprise at the altered condition of affairs; the rustics who in old times scarcely ventured into the city are now in control, and the aristocracy have no scruples against marrying a rich girl of the lower classes; money has acquired a power which has distinguished it in other lands at later times, and Theognis is not without admiration of it, for he is never tired of lamenting his own poverty. Yet his political precepts do not breathe a revengeful spirit; he advises the safe middle course and condemns wanton action. He preferred the safety of the city to the narrower benefit of party success.

The collection as it stands contains many other elegies on the general conduct of life, in which the familiar lessons of experience are told in a neat form. In fact they compose a tolerably complete manual of the view of the world current at the time; it is an admirable expression of popular social wisdom. This quality gave it great popularity; Theognis said what discreet men thought and listened to with sympathetic comprehension. His method is commendable; he lacks, to be sure, the higher poetic qualities, but he is no less valuable as an exponent of the ethical standard of his day. His excellence brought him great fame, and in Athens he enjoyed especial popularity. Euripides and Sophocles made much use of him, and he was admired and quoted by Socrates, Xenophon, Plato and Aristotle. The compilation



had the good fortune to be used as a school-book during the Byzantine period, and so escaped the fate that befell the elegies of most of the other writers.

This use of the poems was very different from that for which they were originally intended. Theognis composed at least the lyric lines to be sung at club-dinners, where a number of companions met, and after feasting admitted flute-players, to whose music, or with the accompaniment of the lyre, short songs were sung. These brief lays repeated the incessant lament over the uncertainty and mutability of life, the universal subject of the minor poetry of all nations. Even Theognis relaxes his severer mood to affirm that the best thing for man would be never to have been born.

Yet it was not here that the poetry of this time found its ultimate expression, but rather in the richer melic verse that was far aloof from any relation with prose in subject and treatment, and indeed remote from the expression of merely personal feeling. Simonides of Ceos is probably the completest master of this form. He was born 556 B.C., the year in which Stesichorus died. His birthplace, Ceos, one of the Cyclades, is near Attica, so that he was early exposed to the influence of Athens, whither he betook himself after a short visit to Italy and Sicily. In this new home he enjoyed the friendship of the sons of the tyrant Peisistratos, and after their overthrow he found a welcome in Thessaly. When the Persian wars broke out Simonides returned to Athens and sang the successes of the Greeks against the invaders, his elegy about Marathon winning a prize over one composed by Æschylus, the tragedian. The second Persian war inspired him anew, and he wrote various poems in commemoration of the Greek triumphs. At this period he stood at the height of his fame; he was intimate with the most eminent citizens of Athens, and well known throughout the Greek-speaking world. When about eighty years old he accepted an invitation to the court of Hiero, the tyrant of Syracuse, a famous patron of letters, who gathered about him the most eminent poets of his time. Pindar and Æschylus also partook of his hospitality. Here Simonides died 466 B.C.

We are told on good authority that he was avaricious, and the position of a poet at this time certainly laid the way open for the accusation, even if it were not corroborated by direct evidence. In order to succeed, the poet was dependent on a patron, who could be most surely pleased by flattery. Despots are certainly averse to the frank utterance of political sentiments, and possibly indifferent to the expression of a poet's personal feelings; their own importance, however, seldom becomes wearisome to them. Consequently, at the courts of the despots of this period, the melic poetry, shunning politics and personal



sentiment, sought safety in celebrating public events, very much as in Italy and England masques were composed to convey flattery and glory to rulers who took a heavy toll from the literature they patronized. The love poems of the Æolic school were not repeated; they were as dead as ballad poetry at the court of Elizabeth; the whole movement was in the direction of a sort of abstract splendor and grace. Fortunately for Simonides, however, he enjoyed the inspiration of the great Greek uprising against the Persian invaders; indeed, his excellence shows how much was at stake, in literature alone, in this momentous struggle between Europe and Asia. The epigrams of Simonides attest his skill and eloquent power. It was, however, in the more complicated pæans, hyperchemes, which were poems accompanied with song and dance, with an attempt to give a dramatic representation of the subject, so that the resemblance to masques becomes at once clear, that he is said to have excelled even himself, but unfortunately very little of this part of his work has come down to us. Of a choral song on the victory at Artemisium we have a few lines in which we may see the quality that antiquity with one consent ascribed to Simonides, namely, emphasis by means of simplicity. The compact beauty of the Greek eludes successful translation, but something of its value may be found in this rendering:

Thermopylæ! when there your heroes fell,  
 Giving them death, you also glory gave;  
 Your soil shall be their altar and their grave;  
 Of their fair death your name shall ever tell,  
 Such dying should to praise, not tears, impel  
 E'en those who loved them, and their deeds still save  
 From all-destroying time their memory brave.  
 This grave their home and monument as well,  
 And let Leonidas himself attest  
 Their courage, who with them finds glorious rest.

The whole of this poem, if it could by any chance be recovered, would make much clear that is now obscure in the history of Greek melic poetry. The scanty lines that alone remain of these long, majestic poems serve but to tease us like vanishing memories which continually elude our attention. Yet what we have shows us some of the qualities of his style, the way in which he worked with simple means rather than by adventurous experiment. We see too that he was a master of pathos. Catullus attests the reputation that Simonides enjoyed for the possession of this quality when he says "*Mœstius lacrymis Simonideis*"—sadder than the tears of Simonides—and we have a beautiful example of its power in the famous lament of Danae. Acrisius, the father of Danae, had enclosed her and her boy Perseus in a carved chest and set them adrift on the sea in a dark night:

While now about that casket rich the storm  
 Rose raging, and the whirling, foaming sea  
 Tossed her, all fearing, with tear-drenched cheek;  
 About her Perseus wound the tender arms,  
 And murmured, "Oh! my child, what grief is mine,  
 And yet thy baby heart can sleep and find  
 Repose in this brass-bound and joyless house,  
 Whose cruel darkness scarce a ray can pierce.  
 Yet art thou undisturbed by the waves' crash,



ACRISIUS PUTS DANAE AND PERSEUS IN THE CHEST.  
*(From a vase painting.)*

And storm winds shriek above thy curly head,  
 While thou liest sleeping with thy lovely face  
 Upon thy crimson mantle pillowed soft.  
 But if this terror breaks in through thy dreams,  
 If aught thou hearest, hear thy mother's voice  
 Bid thee to slumber! Slumber, ocean, too!  
 And oh! unending grief, slumber awhile!  
 Put from thee cruel counsels, Father Zeus,  
 And if too bold my speech strike on thy ear,  
 Forgive it to the mother of my child!"

In the epigram, too, the simplicity of Simonides found full expression. This is one:

Gorgo, thine arm about thy mother lay;  
 Our tender speech, it was the last, was thine;  
 Weeping thou spak'st, "Stay with my father, stay  
 And bear him other children, mother mine!  
 Happier in this than she who dies to-day,  
 That they may live to soothe thy life's decay."

Here is another :

Pythonax and his sister, side by side,  
 Here lie at rest within the grave's embrace,  
 While yet their lovely youth is unfulfilled ;  
 Wherefore their father, Megaritos, willed  
 A consecrated stohe should in this place  
 Mark his undying thanks for those who died.

An epigram, it must be understood, did not have the same meaning to the Greeks that it has in modern times. We understand by the word scarcely more than a rhymed joke, marked by causticity, or at least pertness. But the Greeks regarded it as above all things an occasional poem, and it was Simonides who first gave them real importance. His predecessors wrote very few epigrams, all reports of what they did resting on meagre foundations, and none of his contemporaries were at all equal to him. The circumstances in which he lived inspired him, as they did the whole Greek nation; and his marked literary skill, the product of many years of practice on the part of the Greeks, gave expression to the spirit that was animating his fellow-countrymen in their struggle for freedom. His commemoration of the many deeds of heroism was especially welcome to the Athenians among whom he was living, and wherever a monument was built to the slain heroes, Simonides, as the first of living poets, was called on for an inscription. The two extracts just given show the reasonableness of their request. Simonides was the master of what art last attains, simplicity; and the novel employment of his genius on vivid subjects of general interest indicated the awakening of the Greek mind to the contemplation of more momentous things than the mutability of life, the brief duration of youth and beauty, all, to be sure, undeniable truths, but truths that are of the nature of luxuries for idle people. It is only in periods of inaction that these half mournful melodies find utterance. It is generally the useless man who is most afraid of death, and it is when life is empty that poets are busiest in pointing out its sadness. All literary history teaches us that in different countries similar conditions produce similar work: in Persia a condition of apathy and ease was the accompaniment of abundant pathetic lyric song, in which the picturesque sadness of human life was abundantly treated; in Japan a period of courtly luxury heard the same note sounded; in Italy, Spain and England, the detachment of national interest from the national life, the seclusion of literature behind luxury, saw men occupied with the production of literary gems. It was to work of this kind that Simonides gave new vigor, and the subsequent predominance of the epigram attests its novelty. The other forms that he employed bore the perfection of completed



work; their task was done, the dithyrambic measures, as we shall see, even transformed into the drama. The others were sterile. Yet of Simonides we must judge mainly by report, and this places him high among the world's poets. We see, too, by the number of his victories, both the general poetic interest and his preëminence. The winning of a prize, as he did, over Æschylus, is a proof of this.

Among the imitators of Simonides was his nephew, Bacchylides, who possessed much literary skill, which was devoted, however, mainly to singing the joys of life and the pleasures of society. Simonides was a national poet, and so one of those who address the whole civilized world; Bacchylides was in comparison a local poet of temporary significance. His work only confirms the opinion that we should naturally form of the ripeness and complexity of the Greek civilization at this time; alongside of the patriotism was abundant luxury, and this Bacchylides fully expressed. Certainly all of this sentiment may be found in Simonides, but the older poet combined with it a loftiness which the circumstances of his career demanded. An excellent example of the manner of the nephew is thus translated by Mr. J. A. Symonds:

To mortal men peace giveth these good things :  
 Wealth, and the flowers of honey-throated song ;  
 The flame that springs  
 On carven altars from fat sheep and kine,  
     Slain to the gods in heaven ; and all day long  
 Games for glad youths, and flutes and wreaths and circling wine.  
     Then in the steely shield swart spiders weave  
 Their web and dusky woof ;  
     Rust to the pointed spear and sword doth cleave ;  
     The brazen trump sounds no alarms ;  
 Nor is sleep harried from our eyes aloof,  
     But with sweet rest my bosom warms ;  
 The streets are thronged with lovely men and young,  
 And hymns in praise of boys like flames to heaven are flung.

A little earlier than Simonides was Lasus of Hermione. He lived in Athens at the court of Hipparchus ; there he introduced modifications—just what they were, is not clear—in the compositions of dithyrambs, and contested, sometimes successfully, with Simonides. We have but the merest bit of his work, which probably disappeared before the greater merit of Simonides and Pindar. Melanippides the elder has likewise fallen into some obscurity. Apollodorus of Athens is known only as a teacher of Pindar. Tynnichus of Chalcis, Lamprokles, and Kydias are but names to us.

Meanwhile we find a number of women composing lyric verse, and often with marked success. Among them was Myrtis, who is also said to have been a teacher of Pindar, although this statement has been

doubted. Another was Corinna, who for her part, and probably with more accuracy, has been styled a pupil of Myrtis. Remains of her verses, of which only very few have reached us, are a mere dying echo of the original. It is known, however, that she was frequently successful in poetical contests, once indeed winning the prize over Pindar. What is interesting to us is the proof that women still devoted themselves to verse. Generally, however, they appear in outlying regions. Corinna won her fame in Bœotia. Telesilla of Argos, if tradition is to be believed, handled a sword as well as a pen, for when the Spartan Cleomenes had beaten the Argives, she placed herself at the head of a band of women and drove back the enemy. More fortunate than Myrtis, two lines of her work remain. Praxilla, a possible contemporary, and a native of Sicyon, showed another side of a manly spirit in composing songs for feasts, generally of an instructive kind. Thus :

“Under every stone, my friend, hides a scorpion; take care lest he sting you! There is danger in everything that is hidden.”

Another curious fragment, apparently from a sort of narrative poem, is the answer of Adonis to one who asked him in the shades what it was that he most missed. He said: “The most beautiful thing I have left is the sunlight, next the bright stars and the face of the moon, ripe melons, apples, and pears.” The remark is certainly in character.

The following are taken from Bland's “Collections from the Greek Anthology,” edited by Merivale :

FROM AN ELEGY ON A SHIPWRECK, BY ARCHILOCHUS.

Loud are our griefs, my friend; and vain is he  
 Would steep the sense in mirth and revelry.  
 O'er those we mourn the hoarse-resounding wave  
 Hath clos'd, and whelm'd them in their ocean grave.  
 Deep sorrow swells each breast. But heaven bestows  
 One healing med'cine for severest woes,  
 —Resolv'd endurance—for affliction pours  
 To all by turns,—to-day the cup is ours.  
 Bear bravely, then, the common trial sent,  
 And cast away your womanish lament!

\* \* \* \* \*

Ah! had it been the will of Heav'n to save  
 His honor'd reliques from a nameless grave!  
 Had we but seen th' accustom'd flames aspire,  
 And wrap his corse in purifying fire!

\* \* \* \* \*

Yet what avails it to lament the dead?  
 Say, will it profit aught to shroud our head,  
 And wear away in grief the fleeting hours,  
 Rather than 'mid bright nymphs in rosy bowers?

## ON A PORTRAIT.—ERINNA.

I am the tomb of Ida, hapless bride !  
 Unto this pillar, traveler, turn aside ;  
 Turn to this tear-worn monument, and say,  
 " O envious Death, to charm this life away !"  
 These mystic emblems all too plainly show  
 The bitter fate of her who sleeps below.  
 The very torch that laughing Hymen bore  
 To light the virgin to the bridegroom's door,  
 With that same torch the bridegroom lights the fire  
 That dimly glimmers on her funeral pyre.  
 Thou, too, O Hymen ! bidst the nuptial lay  
 In elegiac moanings die away.

## ALCÆUS.

Jove descends in sleet and snow,  
 Howls the vex'd and angry deep ;  
 Every stream forgets to flow,  
 Bound in winter's icy sleep.  
 Ocean wave and forest hoar  
 To the blast responsive roar.  
 Drive the tempest from your door,  
 Blaze on blaze your hearthstone piling,  
 And unmeasur'd goblets pour  
 Brimful high with nectar smiling.  
 Then beneath your Poet's head  
 Be a downy pillow spread.

## THE SPOILS OF WAR.—ALCÆUS.

Glitters with brass my mansion wide ;  
 The roof is decked on every side  
 In martial pride,  
 With helmets rang'd in order bright  
 And plumes of horse-hair nodding white,  
 A gallant sight —  
 Fit ornament for warrior's brow—  
 And round the walls, in goodly row,  
 Refulgent glow  
 Stout greaves of brass like burnished gold,  
 And corselets there, in many a fold  
 Of linen roll'd :  
 And shields that in the battle fray  
 The routed losers of the day  
 Have cast away ;  
 Eubœan faulchions too are seen,  
 With rich embroider'd belts between  
 Of dazzling sheen :  
 And gaudy surcoats pil'd around,  
 The spoils of chiefs in war renown'd,  
 May there be found.  
 These, and all else that here you see,  
 Are fruits of glorious victory  
 Achieved by me.



## THE RETURN OF SPRING.—IBYCUS.

What time soft zephyrs fan the trees  
 In the blest gardens of th' Hesperides,  
 Where those bright golden apples glow,  
 Fed by the fruitful streams that round them flow,  
 And new-born clusters teem with wine  
 Beneath the shadowy foliage of the vine ;  
 To me the joyous season brings  
 But added torture on his sunny wings.  
 Then Love, the tyrant of my breast,  
 Impetuous ravisher of joy and rest,  
 Bursts, furious, from his mother's arms,  
 And fills my trembling soul with new alarms ;  
 Like Boreas from his Thracian plains,  
 Cloth'd in fierce lightnings, in my bosom reigns,  
 And rages still, the madd'ning power—  
 His parching flames my wither'd heart devour :  
 Wild Phrensy comes my senses o'er,  
 Sweet Peace is fled, and Reason rules no more.

## SIMONIDES.

Long, long and dreary is the night  
 That waits us in the silent grave :  
 Few, and of rapid flight,  
 The years from Death we save.  
 Short—ah, how short—that fleeting space ;  
 And when man's little race  
 Is run, and Death's grim portals o'er him close,  
 How lasting his repose !

## SIMONIDES.

Who would add an hour  
 To the narrow span  
 That concludes the life of man ?  
 Who would envy kings their power,  
 Or gods their endless day,  
 If pleasure were away ?

## BACCHYLIDES.

Happy, to whom the gods have given a share  
 Of what is good and fair ;  
 A life that's free  
 From dire mischance and ruthless poverty.  
 To live exempt from care,  
 Is not for mortal man, how blest soe'er he be.

### CHAPTER III.—PINDAR.

The General Condition of the Lyric Poetry. I.—Its Flowering in Pindar.—His Life —His Relations with the Sicilian Tyrants.—A Comparison between Him and Milton.—The Abundance of his Work, and its Various Divisions. II.—The Epinicion, or Song in Praise of a Victor at the Public Games.—The Games, and their Significance to the Greeks.—The Adulation which Pindar Gave to the Victors; the Serious Nature of his Work; Its Relation to Religious Thought; Its Ethical Importance, All being Qualities that were Outgrowing the Bonds of Mere Lyric Verse. III.—Illustrative Extracts.

THIS brief sketch of the Greek lyric poetry brings us at last to its best known representative, Pindar. He is the crown of the whole movement, and it may be well to observe the course already taken by this form of verse. In the one hundred and eighty years between 580 and 400 B.C., the most characteristic features were the simple Æolic lyric and the Dorian choral lyric. Both of these spread over the whole of Greece, the latter advancing through Argos to the Ionic islands, and from them back to the mainland, while the Æolic lyric forms first prevailed among the islands, and thence moved westward. They reached Athens at about the same time, at the end of the period of the Pisistratidæ, but the more complicated and magnificent choral lyric found a welcome which was denied its humble rival. With the crystallization of Greek power into a single mass under the Persian attack, the political relations of the different nations acquired importance, and in the development of national interests the expression of individual feelings sank out of sight. The elegy decayed under the rivalry of prose, and the choral lyric exactly suited the pompous ceremonies and the new luxury of Athens. Yet some of its forms languished at an early date. The seclusion in which the women of that city were accustomed to live forbade the employment of choruses of maidens, and the encomion, which was introduced by Lasos of Hermione and by Simonides of Ceos, found no following. The dithyramb faded away before the development of the worship of Dionysus that accompanied the rise of the drama.

#### I.

Yet before the decay of lyrical poetry came its full flowering time in the hands of Pindar. This writer was regarded by the Greeks as the greatest of the lyric poets, and fortunately a good part of his

work has come down to us, enough to enable us to see what it was that the Greeks admired. We shall notice, too, that he was the last product of a long period. It is only then that perfection is reached when continued practice has decided on the most desirable form, after



PINDAR.

rejecting what is unsatisfactory, and after a vocabulary and habit of thought have grown up that aid both the poets and their audience. The whole historical civilization of Greece was reflected in its brilliant lyric poetry, with its abundant divisions that had commemorated all



subjects from a lover's languishing despair to the sumptuous ceremonial of great religious festivals. That its growth had been towards complexity was only natural, in view of its close relation with the swiftly ripening civilization, and of the inevitable tendency of even simplicity, which is itself attained only by effort, to become artificial.

Pindar was a Bœotian, and was born at Cynoscephalæ, near Thebes, 522 B.C. It is to be remembered that the Dorian style had already made its way throughout Greece, and that from its original use for religious meetings and festal choruses it had grown to fill the place formerly held by the great epics. The accession of wealth that followed the defeat of the Persians enabled rulers and citizens to pay generously for the panegyrics of the poets. Simonides had been denounced for writing for hire, a charge which was very obnoxious to the Greeks, and, as we shall see, Pindar lent his services to the highest bidder. The new national feeling that began to appear in Greece gave additional importance to the athletic contests, which were the meeting-place for men from every region, and the victors were willing to pay large sums to win the immortality that song could give them. Pindar was born at the very time that the Pythian sports were held. Of his infancy we have the tradition that the future sweetness of his song was prophesied by a swarm of bees that settled on his lips while he was sleeping. The same thing was told, towards the end of their life, of several other Grecian poets, and with the advance of Hellenic culture in Italy the same phenomenon began to make its appearance there, as notably in the case of Virgil, while the doves covered the infant Horace with leaves when he was sleeping in the woods. These incidents seem to show how carefully either the *fauna* of Italy or its poets had read Greek.

His early education was carefully provided for; mention has already been made of some of his teachers, Lasos of Hermione, Myrtis and Corinna. Besides these, an early visit to Athens brought him under the charge of Agathocles and Apollodorus; possibly it was then that he was taught by Lasos. At any rate, although ill-feeling grew up between Athens and Thebes, Pindar long preserved a warm affection for the city that was in fact his intellectual home. When but twenty years of age he composed an ode, the 10th Pythian, for the victory of a Thessalian youth, and very soon he was employed by Kings Arcesilaus of Cyrene and Amyntas of Macedonia, as well as by the free Grecian cities. Yet it is not to be imagined that he held a dishonorable position before these rulers; to be sure he accepted rewards from them for his poems, as writers in the last century accepted gifts from their patrons, but without a sense of degradation. Undoubtedly the influence of patrons was at times evil; writers did their best to make

themselves acceptable, just as now there are men who humor the public against their own better judgment, but it was the only means by which literature could be supported. In Pindar's case we find that he expressed his own convictions. Hiero of Syracuse heard many words of good advice, as did the Cyrenean ruler Arcesilaus IV. Evidently Pindar was not a needy parasite who sought to conciliate the great by flattery, but rather a serious defender of existing institutions, who yet saw and tried to provide against the dangers that threatened them. He was by birth and education an aristocrat, and he maintained an admiration for Doric principles; yet his vision was wide, and after overcoming his temporary prejudice against Athens he was able to praise what that city had done in behalf of national freedom as well as the energy of the Spartans against the Persians, and of the Syracusans against the Carthaginians. This breadth is the more remarkable, because at the beginning Thebes, misled by jealousy of Athens, allied itself with the invader. Above all things, Pindar was honest, and honesty he regarded as the foundation of virtue. In this respect he stands with his friend Æschylus, the great tragedian. In his rigid adherence to a lofty moral code and his adoption of the older form of lyric rather than the new dramatic poetry—a choice which was doubtless in great measure determined by the remoteness of conservative Bœotia from the most modern developments of literature—he bears a strong likeness to Milton. For as Pindar was the complete master of a long-lived method that, after the perfection which he gave to it, was about to disappear, so Milton was the last representative in England of the learned culture of the Renaissance, of the ripest literary development of awakening Europe. Then, too, in both we see the choice of complicated models, and a masterly use of difficult, recondite language and allusion which require for their full comprehension careful study. Both too have won admiration, but often an admiration not unmingled with awe, that has secured for both respect rather than popularity. Pindar is certainly hard reading. He kept himself of set purpose in the clouds, and his exalted flight presented obstacles even to the ancients—how much more to us who must painfully decipher his difficult language and grope our way confusedly through his vast accumulations of mythical lore!

Pindar was a fertile writer. For more than forty years he was busily producing poems of various kinds; hymns, pæans, dithyrambs, prosodia, parthenia, hyperchemes, encomia, scolia, threni, and epinicia, or hymns of victory, which form the bulk of what is left to us of his work. While these various forms were all admired, we are told that the epinicia were the most popular—perhaps the most nearly popular would be the more exact expression, although Pindar was honored



throughout Greece. The Athenians put up a statue in his memory; one of his hymns was inscribed on a slab in the temple of Jupiter Ammon in Thebes. The fact that we have only fragments of other poems than the epinicia compels us to take on trust much of the praise that was given to him, but we have enough of these to see what it was that antiquity admired.

## II.

The epinicion was a song in praise of a victor at the public games. These games, known as the Olympian, Pythian, Nemean, and Isthmian, were the most important festivals of the Greeks. The Olympian games were held at Elis once in four years, in summer, and their importance can scarcely be overestimated. They were held in honor of Zeus, whose golden and ivory statue, the work of Phidias, was the masterpiece of Greek art. It was placed in the temple, and



REWARD OF VICTORY.  
(From a vase painting.)

represented the god, seated, as he is described by Homer, shaking his locks, whereat Olympus shakes. We have the unqualified testimony of Greeks and Romans to the magnificence of this colossal statue—it was forty feet high—which consecrated the place where the games were held. Contestants came from all parts of Greece, and there were numberless spectators assembled, for the occasion was like a great national fair at which there met, not traders, but men who exchanged intellectual novelties. There philosophers debated, poems were read, painters showed their work; it was at this great festival that Herodotus read his history to the assembled multitudes, and it was before this brilliant collection of spectators that races were run, and the vic-



tors attained widespread fame. The apparent prize was a wreath of wild olive. The Pythian games took place in the spring, once in four years; the prizes were a wreath of laurel and a palm. The Nemean games were held in the Nemean groves, near Cleonæ, in Argolis, every three years, and the successful contestant received a wreath of parsley. The Isthmian games were held at Corinth, at the same intervals; the prize was a wreath of pine. These modest rewards were, however, but certificates of brilliant success over many and sturdy rivals.



CROWNING A VICTOR.  
(From a bowl in the Luynes collection.)

Contestants appeared, not only from all Greece, but from remote regions where Hellenic colonies had been founded, from Sicily and even from Africa. These distant tyrants and the free cities and noble families vied with one another in magnificence and liberality, the chariot races especially inspiring ostentatious emulation. In one race, Pindar tells us, forty chariots were upset; one may judge from that incident of the abundance of competitors. The winners were little short of heroes. Plutarch tells us that one town removed a part of its walls to admit a victor as if he were a conquering general. Cicero scarcely exaggerated when he said that to a Greek an Olympic victory was dearer than a triumph to a Roman. Consequently the odes of the greatest poets were properly employed in help-



CHARIOT RACE.  
(From a vase painting.)

ing the fortunate winners to secure immortality. There was no festival, one might almost say no incident of public life that lacked its lyrical praise; naturally enough Simonides or Pindar was solicited to lend additional luster to these great solemnities, and to celebrate with song such important victories. We see from what we have of Pindar's work that he brought to the accomplishment of this task all the complicated machinery of the lyric verse. This form had already abandoned the personal note of the *Æolic* writers, and with the aid of music and dance had become an artificial method of expression. Its main inspiration was the religious sense, for to the Greek mind religion was everywhere. The remote feeling of an uncivilized race that the hand of a god was directly present in every circumstance of life survived among the people of this race, together with the numerous gods who shared the duties of supervision over all phenomena. It was in their praise that the lyric poetry found its busiest employment. This was extended to the celebration of the various victories. Pindar praised not so much the individual contestant as the deity who had aided him to secure the victory, or in whose honor the sports were held. Then, too, the deities of the city and of the family had to receive their due praise. The success of the winner was far from being the sole possession of one man; it was a glory shared by all his kin, by the men of his city and race, by his ancestors, by all who were in any way connected with him. Hence the odes addressed a larger audience than they would have done if they had simply celebrated one man's prowess; they sang the great event rather than an individual. It is this religious bearing that makes the poems hard for us to read. They are the full product of a long-growing system whereof our knowledge is most scanty, and they are rich with references to a mass of mythological lore that bound the living Greeks to a fabulous past, and made their religion a very part of their being. The myths underlay history, politics, morals, everywhere presenting an ideal image of human life to the poet and the artist. It was as if the gods had stepped down from Olympus to share the work of men and to aid them with brilliant and inspiring example. Consequently the lyric poet was never tired of celebrating the myths that were connected with the subjects of his song. He was free to employ mere local legends; he could even invent myths in honor of victors, as in modern times fictitious genealogies have lent additional luster to famous heroes.

The long life of the lyric poetry had formed certain rigid rules that no one was at liberty to break. Thus the poet was expected not to utter his own personal sentiments, but to observe the laws governing the various forms of composition. He was to praise noble actions,

not to blame. The license that Archilochus, for instance, had enjoyed was wholly denied him. His hands were bound, as much as are now the hands of a man who composes religious music, and he was compelled to magnify the glory of the gods. The way in which Pindar did this shows the extent of the changes in Greek thought. In Hesiod the gods are crude beings; in Pindar's time the swiftly growing civilization has made over man's whole relation to the universe; the intellectual travail of centuries has refined the morality and found a new meaning in the old stories. These are not denied or derided; they are held to contain a deeper meaning than was once apparent.

All these things become clear in what Pindar has to say concerning human destiny, for it is about this subject that all serious thought revolves. Ancestor worship had been handed down in a weakened form from remote times, and Pindar asserts the interest that the dead take in the glorious deeds of their descendants. Thus in the fifth Pythian he says that all the sacred kings beneath their monuments, from the bosom of the earth that now encloses them, hear the great virtue of their descendant refreshed by soft dew of flattering hymns; and elsewhere he affirms that the dead take part in the noble actions of their descendants; the dust of the tomb does not rob them of the brilliant honor of their race. More important are his expressions of the future world. In this region the righteous are separated from the wicked, and their abode is a charming region where the sun forever shines, fresh breezes blow, and lovely trees, fruits, and flowers abound,—a scene, it will be noticed, not unlike that depicted by the early painters of the New Jerusalem. The after-world of which we are told in the *Odyssey* is a pallid shadow of this world, filled with an awful gloom, worse, to be sure, for sinners, but kindly to none. In Pindar, however, we find the righteous enjoying pleasures, for

“ There some please  
Themselves with feats of horseback exercise,  
And some with draughts and others with the lute,  
And every sort of happiness  
Blooms in luxuriance there :  
Whilst a sweet odor lies  
For aye above that land so fair,  
From them that mingle victims numberless  
With fire, whose radiance shines  
Afair upon the gods' well-tended shrines.”

The wicked, on the other hand, undergo cruel torments; their souls hasten down a steep path to the gulf of Erebus, where the slowly crawling streams of black night exhale noxious miasms. The souls of the accursed, he also says, forever wander about the earth in dreadful torment, in eternal bonds of agony, while the blessed dwell in heaven,



singing hymns of praise to the great God. To be sure, Pindar puts the abode of the blessed at one time in the regions under the earth and at another on Olympus, but one will not have to seek long for similar trifling inconsistencies. What is better worth studying is Pindar's mention of metempsychosis, with yet another indication of the future abode of the sinless. On them, he says, the sunlight falls by night and day, and theirs is a life void of toil; they do not need to till the earth or to sail the sea, but these favorites of the gods, who have followed virtue, pass tearless days. Whoever has been able, here and in that abode, thrice to keep his soul from stain of sin, passes to the happy isles, where the breezes from the sea whisper about them, and where on land and water grow odorous golden flowers of which the blessed make wreaths to bind their heads and arms. Again, he says the souls of those from whom Persephone has received expiation for their sins she lets return again in the ninth year to the sunlight; from these spring illustrious kings, men invincible in their strength and admirable in their wisdom; after their death posterity honors them as heroes.

All of these statements show the greater complications of religious thought in later days, and naturally the view of life on this side of the Styx had become more intricate. To be sure, we find even among the least civilized races frequent expression of the uncertainty and mutability of human existence. They are bewailed by savages as well as by riper peoples; this part of the lesson of life is soon learned, or, at least, soon stated. Pindar is never tired of repeating it. "Ephemeral creatures, what are we? what are we not? Man is but the dream of a shadow; when the gods turn upon him a ray from heaven, a bright light surrounds him and his life is sweet." This is his continual refrain; even in the triumphal odes, in his songs of victory, he sounds his lament for the inevitable tragedy of life. All good lies in the hands of the gods, or of the fate above the gods, who may dispense or withhold it, as to them seems good. "In a moment the inconstant breath of fortune turns from pole to pole." "When a man, without too much pains, has obtained some advantage, he seems skillful, and we call others foolish by his side; he appears to have secured his life by the wisdom of his plans. But this is not in man's power, God alone can grant it, who raises to-day one man and holds another beneath his mighty hand." But there would be no limit to the extracts from Pindar that might establish the proof of his lofty melancholy. Yet, with this, he knows how to celebrate the glowing joy of life in these young conquerors; he sings youth, beauty, strength, and love, and all with a firm vigor far removed from effeminacy. His note is that of a trumpet; he is Miltonic in the lofty air with which he treats his

subjects as in his vivid language. He chants the praises of glory with wonderful fervor, as if the winning of the prizes at these games atoned for the greater part of human ill. Success in these and in war formed the highest gratification for men.

With regard to man's duties he sounds as lofty a note as in his praise of the gods. In his religious utterance he at times rivalled even the Hebrew prophets, as when in the ninth Pythian ode he said: "Thou knowest the fixed end of all things and all their ways; thou knowest the number of the leaves the earth puts forth in spring, and hast counted the sands in the sea and in the rivers, as they are moved by the waves and by the sweep of the winds; thou knowest what will come and whence it will rise." In morals his constant lesson was the one already familiar to the Greeks, according to which moderation was strongly counselled. While he saw the sadness of life he escaped depressing melancholy, for every thing lay in the hands of the gods, and this faith made duty simple, even if austere, and at times puzzling. We have seen that many of the Greeks lamented a long life; it was their constant wail that those whom the gods loved died young. But Pindar's faith preserved him from this sadness; he is always serene in his lofty majesty. If we compare him with what we know of the other lyric poets of Greece, we shall find that they all possessed in common a certain tone, although they are to be distinguished by separate qualities. The three leading names are those of Alcman, Stesichorus, and Simonides. Alcman lived in the seventh century; Stesichorus at the beginning of the sixth; Simonides at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the fifth, B.C. Of the first-named we have but very little left, and this is marked by an air of simplicity that is very unlike what is to be found in Pindar. Stesichorus kept closer to the epic style, borrowing from those long poems the subjects of his songs. His style too appears to have possessed an abundance and facile eloquence very unlike the qualities of Pindar. In Simonides again we find grace and soft emotions very different from Pindar's remote majesty. Pindar is not pathetic; we notice in him rather an intellectual massiveness than an attractive and sympathetic treatment of the feelings. He is remote from general interest, and his loneliness is only intensified by his liberal use of myths that are as strange to us as the continual references to Latin civilization would be to one absolutely ignorant of the classics. It is not too much to say that a great deal of Pindar's work cannot be understood by us as it was by the Greeks; it is a sealed book to the moderns. For one thing, their relation to Greek music is something that we cannot understand. That this was intimate and important is well known, yet this is lost to us. Even Cicero said that when Pindar's lines were



separated from the music for which they were written they lacked almost every appreciable trace of rhythm ; how then can we detect it ? Of the merits of his style, too, we can catch only a small part, yet enough is left to give us a deep impression of a great man. A bold imagination and an unfettered vocabulary always present problems to readers, and these odes which formed the principal literary expression of a comparatively unknown civilization are no exception to the rule. Yet, remote as are some of the qualities of his verse, there is a core which cannot fail to delight readers, a lofty tone which cannot fail to impress itself upon every one who will read him. It is to be remembered, however, that in the multitude and fulness of his allusions his style is like modern music, which abounds in melodies and suggestions that escape separate analysis, and combine together to leave a general impression. The fourteenth Olympiad, a very short ode, may illustrate this side of Pindar's manner. It is given in a prose translation :

" Ye dwellers in a settlement that enjoys the blessings of Cephissus' waters, a land of beautiful steeds, queens of fertile Orchomenus famed in song, ye Graces, guardians of the ancient race of the Minyæ, hear me, for to you I pray ; since it is by your favor that all which is pleasant and sweet comes to mortals, if any man is a poet, or handsome, or has gained glory by victory. Nay, the gods themselves preside not at the dance or the banquet without the revered Graces ; but they are the directors of all that is done in heaven, and setting their seats by the side of the Pythian Apollo with the golden bow, they worship the eternal majesty of the Olympian Father. O venerable Aglaïa, and thou, song-loving Euphrosyne, daughters of the mightiest of the gods, lend me your ears, and thou also, tuneful Thalia, and regard this Comus, advancing with sprightly foot under favoring fortune. I have come to sing of Asopichus in the Lydian air, and with the strains of the lute, because the land of the Minyæ hath won at Olympia through thee. Go now, Echo, to the dark-walled abode of Persephone, and convey to his father the glorious news that when you see Cleodamus you may tell him about his son, that she hath crowned his youthful locks, by the vales of the renowned Pisa, with wreaths from the chivalrous contests."

In this brief poem Pindar has made mention of many things: he has praised the victor, a boy who has won the boys' foot-race, B.C. 476; he has referred to his dead father; he has eulogized his country and its principal deities, all the essentials of the ode, and with the glow of adoration and praise there is combined a pensive melancholy which raises the poem above a mere set congratulation. This one is simple enough ; however, many of the others are more complex. Such, for instance, is the first Pythian.

The absolute ripeness of form is readily perceptible, even through the translation, in these extracts from Pindar, and the mastery of music and metres, the possession of abundant material, the facility with which complexity is treated, all betoken the completed method of utterance



that awaits a fuller development. The almost cloying perfection of the lyric verse was beating the air when it celebrated subjects of such comparative unimportance as these athletic victories; but when the time came that Greece awoke from its internecine wars and pleasant peace to find its existence endangered, and was victorious over a mighty foe, all the practice that had been acquired in these remote centuries had prepared a new form of expression, which in its dignity



THE GRACES.

and beauty matched the amazing political and military enthusiasm that must have astounded the Greeks themselves as much as it did the Persians. It is with justice that some writers speak of the period in Greek history before the Persian wars as the middle ages; it was a time when the whole country was ripening and making ready for its full life, for its brief period of wonderful achievement; and this not merely in literature, but in its politics as well, for both are only different forms

of expression for the same men. And it is well to observe how full of seriousness the Greeks had packed the forms which still survived from a time of savageness. These races, for instance, and all the games, had such an origin, but that was forgotten in the rich and sudden development of ethical and religious treatment of important questions.

A striking characteristic of the lyric verse had been brevity and compactness,—in a word, extreme grace of form,—a quality which appealed especially to cultivated readers or hearers. It was distinctly an aristocratic luxury, not a means of popular expression. This remoteness from the current of life secured for the poetry all that luxury and ease can give, and when it was the Greeks to whom they were given the result was a lyrical literature of the most amazing fulness and beauty. Its limitations, its narrow range of subjects, and what with all its charm remains a conventional mode of expression, marked it as the possession of a few persons of refinement, and thus ill adapted to express the new and vastly wider emotions of the greater days. Yet, of course, its influence remained; the new literature which succeeded it did not break with the old traditions, but grew from them in a larger and richer field; while the lyric verse flourished without a rival, it was continually helping to establish the authority of a literary form in which precision as well as grace should exercise great authority. For centuries these formed the poetical ideal, and they affected the subsequent development of great poetry which never lost its original charm and exactness of expression. In the drama this acquired a special form under the influence of the intenser and broader subjects with which it dealt, and of the religious solemnity of the dramatic festivals; but these qualities still remained.

#### TO MEGAKLES OF ATHENS.

Imperial Athens! with thy name I best may 'gin  
To build the basement of my lofty song,  
That laud's Alkmaion's sturdy kin  
For horsemanship. What country or what house  
More glorious  
Could poet name amid this earth's unceasing din  
To thrill Hellenic tongue?

For wheresoe'er the town be, 'tis a household word,  
The honor of Erechtheus' populace,  
Who have thy holy shrine restored  
In sacred Pytho beautiful to see,  
Apollo. Me  
Thy conquests and thy fathers' — five on Isthmus' sward,  
One in Olympia's race,

Surpassing, Zeus conferred, and two  
 At Kirrha — lead to hymn thee — Megakles,  
 And much thy new success doth please  
 Me ; still I rue  
 That envy will not all thy merit spare  
 To cross. But, so they say,  
 Such steadfast, flourishing success alway  
 Must good and evil bear.

## TO MELISSUS OF THEBES.

If any man, by glorious feats of strength,  
 Or store of honest gold, have got him fame,  
 Yet curbs within his soul besetting insolence,  
 He well deserves that on his name  
 His countrymen should heap their praises. Excellence,  
 O Zeus, to mortals comes of thee ;  
 And reverential folk prosperity  
 Have more enduring than their neighborhood ;  
 While crooked hearts their seeming good,  
 Though flourishing awhile, will leave alone at length.

For noble deeds beholders it behoves  
 To recompense the brave with noble song,  
 And kindly him to laud who leads the gay parade.  
 Now to Melissus here belong  
 Twin crown for conquests twain ; the one in Isthmus' glade  
 By favorable Fate was sent  
 To turn his heart to jocund merriment ;  
 The other gathered in the hollow glen  
 Of the deep-chested lion, when  
 He bade them shout the name of Thebes, the Thebes he loves,  
 Where rival chariots ran, victorious.  
 Nor does he put to shame  
 Th' hereditary courage of his kin.  
 Ye well have known how oft Kleonymus  
 The honors of the chariot race would win ;  
 And so his mother's folk, who trace to Labdakus  
 Their pedigree,  
 Got wealth by four-in-hands. But rollingly  
 Time plays a changing game,  
 The sons of gods from hurt are free alone.

## TO HIERO OF SYRACUSE.

My golden cittern, whom  
 Apollo keeps  
 In common with the raven-tressèd Muses, thee,  
 Beginner of the revelry,  
 The dancers' step awaits ; the minstrel choir,  
 When thy sweet strings' melodious quivering  
 The prelude wake, thy signs inspire  
 The hymn that ushers in the festival to sing.  
 Zeus' pointed bolt of fire eternal thou in gloom  
 Canst shroud ; the eagle on his sceptre sleeps,  
 And lets his wide  
 Pinions so swift of flight droop down on either side ;



Of all the feathered kind  
 Though he be lord,  
 About his beakèd head a cloud of sable night  
 Thou sheddest ; o'er his orbs of sight,  
 Spelled by thy sweep of song, his eyelids close  
 In pleasant slumber ; softly to and fro  
 He sways his back in deep repose ;  
 Nay, headstrong Ares' self has oftentimes let go  
 His lance's cruel point with sleep to glad his mind.  
 To souls of gods thy missiles calm afford,  
     With skill endued  
 By Phoibos and the Muses' full-clad sisterhood,  
     But whosoe'er  
 Of Zeus' love have never had a share  
     Are sore distressed  
 To hear the cry of the Pierides  
 On land or midst the dark resistless seas.  
 Like him who lies in baleful Tartarus,  
 Typhœus of the hundred heads, the deadly foe  
 Of all the gods, whom erst  
 Kilikia's famous cavern nursed ;  
 But now the sea-beat cliffs precipitous  
 That frown o'er Cumæ hold him down,  
 And all Sikelia weighs upon his shaggy chest ;  
 And Etna's pillar-peak that pierces air,  
     With ice bestrown,  
 The yearlong nurse of nipping snow ;  
 From whose recesses jets  
 The awesome flood  
 Of fire that none may near ; and while the daylight beams  
 A cataract of smoke that gleams  
 With lurid lights her torrents pour, but when  
 The dusk of even falls, her blaze blood-red  
 Rolls boulders huge each ragged glen  
 Adown, to splash and sink in ocean's level bed.  
 'Tis yonder reptile born to lame Hephaistus lets  
 These fountains forth. To all the neighborhood  
     A prodigy  
 Of fear and wonder full he is to hear and see ;  
 And how the plain between  
 And Etna's crest  
 Of dark-leaved forest he is chained, and all his back  
 The torments of his bedding rack  
 Laid out at length. O Zeus, I pray thee grant  
 That I may find acceptance in thine eye,  
 Who lov'st this mountain-top to haunt,  
 A fruitful country's front, whose namesake city nigh  
 Her famous founder has bedecked with glory's sheen ;  
 Since Pytho's herald on the course confessed  
     Her honors thro'  
 The chariot-race's crown adjudged to Hiero.

By those who sail  
 Across the seas 'tis deemed of prime avail,  
 When they begin  
 A trip, to quit the port with breezes fair ;  
 For thus 'tis like that they will home repair  
 With better luck ; so in my song of praise  
 For this success I fain would find an augury

That many a future year,  
 For steeds' victorious career,  
 And crowns and feasts and hymns that minstrels raise,  
 Renown on Etna may attend.  
 Oh! Lykian Phoibos, Delos' king, delighting in  
 Kastalia's fount in steep Parnassus' vale,  
 Do thou befriend  
 This noble land, and hear my plea.

For human excellence  
 From heaven derives  
 All means of growth, and none, unless the gods assent,  
 Is wise or strong or eloquent.  
 And Hiero to laud is my intent ;  
 So hope I that my missile may not fall  
 Without the lists, as javelin sent  
 From whirling hand with cheek of brass, but distance all  
 Opponents by its cast. Would heaven the affluence  
 And gifts of wealth's increase wherein he lives  
 May ne'er be less ;  
 While time of anguish past affords forgetfulness ;

Or brings to mind instead  
 The memory  
 How boldly in the stress of fight he held his own ;  
 When at the hands of gods a throne  
 They got, an honor such as Hellene ne'er  
 May reap, the diadem of majesty  
 And unexampled wealth to wear.  
 And now forsooth in Philokteta's fashion he  
 Has gone to war, and one that held a haughty head  
 Has found it need his flatterer to be.  
 They say of yore  
 The godlike heroes came from Lemnos' lonely shore,

The archer-son  
 Of Poias, by his ulcer nigh undone,  
 To fetch away ;  
 Who wasted Priam's city, and at length  
 The Danæans' labors ended, poor of strength  
 Although he went, for thus it was decreed.  
 So may the healing god vouchsafe to Hiero  
 In coming time to be,  
 Granting him opportunity  
 To gain whate'er his heart of hearts may need.  
 Before Deinomones upraise,  
 Sweet Muse, the pæan of the four-in-hands, I pray ;  
 For children share the joy by fathers won ;  
 Then bid our lays  
 For Etna's sovereign friendly flow ;

Since Hiero for him  
 Resolved to rear  
 That town in freedom 'neath the laws of Hyllus' rule.  
 For in Aigimius' Doric school  
 The sons of Pamphilus and Herakles —  
 Who 'neath the slopes of wild Taygetus  
 Are settled, dwelling at their ease —

Have ever wished to bide. With fortune prosperous  
 They quitted Pindus' clefts in ages distance-dim,  
 Amyklæ gained, and dwelt in glory near  
 The snowy steeds  
 Of Leda's twins, abloom with fame of warlike deeds.

Grant, Zeus who hearest prayer,  
 In years to come  
 That kings and citizens by Amenanus' burn  
 May truth from falsehood aye discern.  
 Let Hiero a guiding-star arise  
 His son to lead, his folk in honor hold,  
 And both in quiet harmonize.  
 I pray thee, Kronos' son, their war-cry overbold  
 Let not Phoinikian nor Tyrrhenian foemen dare  
 To shout again, but keep them still at home,  
 And ponder well  
 The lamentable loss that all their fleet befell

At Cumæ when,  
 By Syracuse's lord subdued, their men  
 He bade to throw  
 Forth from their speedy ships into the sea ;  
 And from their heavy bonds of slavery  
 All Hellas freed. From Salamis the fame  
 Of Athens I will chant for meed ; the deadly fight  
 At Sparta sing, that nigh  
 Kithairon's heights was fought, whereby  
 The Persian host of bent-bowed archers came  
 To ruin ; while to laud the kin  
 Of great Deinomenes my hymn of praise shall flow  
 Of deeds in Himera's well-watered glen  
 Achieved, wherein  
 Their enemies were put to flight.

If at the season meet  
 One lift his voice,  
 Twisting his many threads to one diminished strand,  
 Less hard will be man's critic-brand  
 Of blame ; for evermore satiety  
 Tarnishes eager hopes : a townsman's ears  
 Do ne'er so much in secrecy  
 Weigh down his soul, as when a friend's success he hears.  
 Yet pass not honors by, for envy is more sweet  
 Than pity. Guide with honest helm the choice  
 Of yonder throng :  
 On Truth's good anvil forge the arrows of thy tongue.

For if a syllable  
 Of folly fall  
 Out of thy mouth, 'tis deemed of moment, being thine :  
 Thy every good or evil sign  
 A host of trusty witnesses observe :  
 Of many people thou hast stewardship.  
 Thy native bloom of heart preserve ;  
 And if thou lovest to have thy praise on every lip  
 Shrink not from spending : loose the sail that breezes swell,  
 Like wary skipper. Be not snared withal  
 By cozening cheats.  
 'Tis posthumous renown that tongue to tongue repeats,



Alone may show,  
 Dear friend, the life of mortals hence who go,  
 By minstrelsy  
 And story-tellers' faithful histories.  
 The kindly worth of Kroisus never dies ;  
 And Phalaris, of the burning brazen bull  
 And cruel mind, has earned an infamous renown  
 Wide as the world, and ne'er  
 Do tuneful citterns let him share  
 Their joyance when the banquet hall is full  
 Of carols of the gentle train  
 Of boys. The first of prizes is prosperity,  
 The second good repute ; but he, below  
 Who both may gain  
 And keep, has won the highest crown.

## FOR ARISTOMENES OF AIGINA.

WINNER OF THE WRESTLING-MATCH. PYTH. VIII.



WRESTLING-MATCH.  
 (Florentine Group.)

O kindly Peace, daughter of Righteousness, thou that makest cities great, and holdest the supreme keys of counsels and of wars, welcome thou this honour to Aristomenes, won in the Pythian games.

Thou knowest how alike to give and take gentleness in due season ; thou also, if any have moved thy heart unto relentless wrath, dost terribly confront the enemy's might, and sinkest insolence in the sea.

Thus did Porphyryon provoke thee unaware. Now precious is the gain that one beareth away from the house of a willing giver. But violence shall ruin a man at the last, boast he never so loudly. He of Kilikia, Typhon of the hundred heads, escaped not this, neither yet the king of giants ; but by the thunderbolt they fell and by the bow of Apollo, who with kind intent hath welcomed Xenarches home from Kirrha, crowned with Parnassian wreaths and Dorian song.

Not far from the Graces' ken falleth the lot of this righteous island-com-

monwealth, that hath attained unto the glorious deeds of the sons of Aiakos ; from the beginning is her fame perfect, for she is sung of as the muse of heroes, foremost in many games and in violent fights ; and in her mortal men also is she pre-eminent.

But my time faileth me to offer her all I might tell at length, by lute and softer voice of man, so that satiety vex not.

So let that which lieth in my path, my debt to thee, O boy, the youngest of thy country's glories, run on apace, winged by my art.

For in wrestlings thou art following the footsteps of thy uncles, and shamest neither Theognetos at Olympia, nor the victory that at Isthmus was won by Kleitomachos' stalwart limbs.

And in that thou makest great the clan of the Midylidai thou attainest unto the very praise which on a time the son of Oikleus spake in a riddle, when he saw at seven-gated Thebes the sons of the seven standing to their spears, what time from Argos came the second race on their new enterprise. Thus spake he while they fought : " By nature, son, the noble temper of thy sires shineth forth in thee. I see clearly the speckled dragon that Alkmaion weareth on his bright shield, foremost at the Kadmean gates.

" And he who in the former fight fared ill, hero Adrastos, is now endowed with tidings of a better omen. Yet in his own house his fortune shall be contrariwise ; for he alone of all the Danaan host, after that he shall have gathered up the bones of his dead son, shall by favor of the gods come back with unharmed folk to the wide streets of Abas."

On this wise spake Amphiaraos. Yea, and with joy I too myself throw garlands on Alkmaion's grave, and shower it withal with songs, for that being my neighbor and guardian of my possessions he met me as I went up to the earth's centre-stone, renowned in song, and showed forth the gift of prophecy which belongeth unto his house.

But thou, far-darter, ruler of the glorious temple whereto all men go up, amid the glens of Pytho didst there grant this the greatest of joys ; and at home before didst thou bring to him at the season of thy feast the keen-sought prize of the pentathlon. My king, with willing heart I make avowal that through thee is harmony before mine eyes in all that I sing of every conqueror.

By the side of our sweet-voiced song of triumph hath Righteousness taken her stand, and I pray, O Xenarches, that the favor of God be unailing toward the fortune of thee and thine. For if one hath good things to his lot without long toil, to many he seemeth therefore to be wise among fools and to be crowning his life by right desiring of the means. But these things lie not with men : it is God that ordereth them, who setteth up one and putteth down another, so that he is bound beneath the hands of the adversary.

Now at Megara also hast thou won a prize, and in secluded Marathon, and in the games of Hera in thine own land, three times, Aristomenes, hast thou overcome. And now on the bodies of four others hast thou hurled thyself with fierce intent, to whom the Pythian feast might not award, as unto thee, the glad return, nor the sweet smile that welcometh thee to thy mother's side ; nay, but by secret ways they shrink from meeting their enemies, stricken down by their evil hap.

Now he that hath lately won glory in the time of his sweet youth is lifted on the wings of his strong hope and soaring valor, for his thoughts are above riches. In a little moment groweth up the delight of men ; yea, and in like sort falleth it to the ground, when a doom adverse hath shaken it.

Things of a day—what are we, and what not? Man is a dream of shadows.

Nevertheless, when a glory from God hath shined on them, a clear light abideth upon men, and serene life.

Aigina, mother dear, this city in her march among the free, with Zeus and lordly Aiakos, with Peleus and valiant Telamon, and with Achilles, guard thou well.

#### FOR ARISTOKLEIDES OF AIGINA,

##### WINNER IN THE PANKRATION.

O divine Muse, our mother, I pray thee come unto this Dorian isle Aigina stranger-thronged, for the sacred festival of the Nemean Games: for by the waters of Asopos young men await thee, skilled to sing sweet songs of triumph, and desiring to hear thy call.

For various recompense are various acts athirst; but victory in the games above all loveth song, of crowns and valiant deeds the fittest follower. Thereof grant us large store for our skill, and to the king of heaven with its thronging clouds do thou who art his daughter begin a noble lay; and I will marry the same to the voices of singers and to the lyre.

A pleasant labor shall be mine in glorifying this land where of old the Myrmidons dwelt, whose ancient meeting-place Aristokleides through thy favour hath not sullied with reproach by any softness in the forceful strife of the pankration; but a healing remedy of wearying blows he hath won at least in this fair victory in the deep-lying plain of Nemea.

Now if this son of Aristophanes, being fair of form and achieving deeds as fair, hath thus attained unto the height of manly excellence, no further is it possible for him to sail untraversed sea beyond the pillars of Herakles, which the hero-god set to be wide-famed witnesses of the end of voyaging: for he had overcome enormous wild beasts on the seas, and tracked the streams through marshes to where he came to the goal that turned him to go back homeward, and there did he mark out the ends of the earth.

But to what headland of a strange shore, O my soul, art thou carrying aside the course of my ship? To Aiakos and to his race I charge thee bring the Muse. Herein is perfect justice, to speak the praise of good men: neither are desires for things alien the best for men to cherish: search first at home: a fitting glory for thy sweet song hast thou gotten there in deeds of ancient valour.

Glad was King Peleus when he cut him his gigantic spear, he who took Iolkos by his single arm without help of any host, he who held firm in the struggle Thetis the daughter of the sea.

Also the city of Laomedon did mighty Telamon sack, when he fought with Iolaos by his side, and again to the war of the Amazons with brazen bows he followed him; neither at any time did man-subduing terror abate the vigour of his soul.

By inborn worth doth one prevail mightily; but whoso hath but precepts is a vain man and is fain now for this thing and now again for that, but a sure step planteth he not at any time, but handleth countless enterprises with a purpose that achieveth naught.

Now Achilles of the yellow hair, while he dwelt in the house of Philyra, being yet a child made mighty deeds his play; and brandishing many a time his little javelin in his hands, swift as the wind he dealt death to wild lions



in the fight, and boars he slew also and dragged their heaving bodies to the Kentaur, son of Kronos, a six years' child when he began, and thenceforward continually. And Artemis marvelled at him, and brave Athene, when he slew deer without dogs or device of nets; for by fleetness of foot he overcame them.

This story also of the men of old have I heard: how within his cavern of stone did deep-counselled Cheiron rear Jason, and next Asklepios, whom he taught to apportion healing drugs with gentle hand: after this it was that he saw the espousals of Nereus' daughter of the shining wrists, and fondling nursed her son, strongest of men, rearing his soul in a life of harmony; until by blowing of sea winds wafted to Troy he should await the war-cry of the Lykians and of the Phrygians and of the Dardanians, cried to the clashing of spears; and joining in battle with the lancer Ethiops hand to hand should fix this purpose in his soul, that their chieftain Memnon, Helenos' fiery cousin, should go back again to his home no more.

Thenceforward burneth ever a far-shining light for the house of Aiakos; for thine, O Zeus, is their blood, even as thine also are the games whereat my song is aimed, by the voice of the young men of the land proclaiming aloud her joy. For victorious Aristokleides hath well earned a cheer, in that he hath brought new renown to this island, and to the Theoroi of the Pythian god, by striving for glory in the games.

By trial is the issue manifest, wherein may one be more excellent than his fellows, whether among boys a boy, as among men a man, or in the third age among elders, according to the nature of our mortal race. Four virtues doth a long life bring, and biddeth one fit his thought to the things about him.\* From such virtues this man is not far.

Friend, fare thee well: I send to thee this honey mingled with white milk, and the dew of the mixing hangeth round about it, to be a drink of minstrelsy distilled in breathings of Aiolian flutes; albeit it come full late.

Swift is the eagle among the birds of the air, who seizeth presently with his feet his speckled prey, seeking it from afar off; but in low places dwell the chattering daws. To thee at least, by the will of throned Kleio, for sake of thy zeal in the games, from Nemea and from Epidauros and from Megara hath a great light shined.

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\* This is very obscure: Böckh said that the longer he considered it the more obscure it became to him. Donaldson is inclined to think that Pindar is speaking with reference to the Pythagorean division of virtue into four species, and that he assigns one virtue to each of the four ages of human life (on the same principle as that which Shakspeare has followed in his description of the seven ages) namely temperance as the virtue of youth, courage of early manhood, justice of mature age, and prudence of old age.—*E. Myers' Transl. of Pindar.*

## BOOK III.—THE GREEK TRAGEDY.

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### CHAPTER I.—ITS GROWTH AND HISTORY.

I.—The Prominence of Athens after the Wars with Persia—The Qualities of the Athenians; Their Intellectual Vivacity; the Aristocratic Conditions of Their Society—The Little Influence of Women and Books—Their Political Training—Their Literary Enthusiasm. II.—The Drama a Growth, not a Special Creation — The Early Condition of Dramatic Performances — The Celebration of Festivals; the Dithyramb; the Rudimentary Dialogues; the Worship of Dionysus—The Drama Before Æschylus, and the Resemblance between its Growth and that of Modern Times. III.—The Mechanical Conditions—The Theatres; the Actors and their Equipment — The Stage — The Masks — The Absence of Minute Detail, and Unlikeness to Modern Drama—The Chorus; its Composition and its Share in the Performance at Different Times. IV.—The Author's Relation to his Play—The Tetralogy and its Obscurities—Further Obscurities Besetting the Subject, such as the Symmetry of the Plays—The Plays that Survive—The General Development of the Drama and its Dependence on the Life of the Time.

#### I.

THE lyric poetry then flourished in different parts of Greece, passing through various stages of development from the expression of personal feeling to its appearance as a magnificent formal mode of utterance, reaching at last a completeness, in the hands of Simonides and Pindar, that foreboded a change; for the perfection of any literary method, once attained, marks its swift decay. The change that was about to appear had other causes. Greece, by its victory over the Persians, had acquired a comparative unity and an absolute consciousness of strength that altered the whole condition of the country. One result of the victories was the prominence that was given to Athens, a prominence that, however, inspired the enmity of Sparta. The glory that Athens had acquired by its part in the war was undeniable. The power of Persia had twice shattered itself against its stubborn defence, and thus not only were its citizens filled with pride, but even its neighbors had to confess the proved military prowess of the defender of Greece. In Attica, too, the best qualities of the Greeks found their fullest development. In no other country did the ideals of this race come near

the height that was here almost attained. The Athenians possessed in full measure the Ionic vivacity and flexibility, standing in this respect in marked contrast to the crude and rigid conservatism of the Spartans; their literature and art survive to show what the human intelligence has been able to accomplish under favorable conditions.



MELPOMENE.  
(*The Muse of Tragedy.*)

Yet it would be unfair to ascribe all the merit of Greek work to their circumstances; their intellectual activity lay behind this, the same quality that underlay and inspired all their work. The Athenians already possessed certain elements of civilization to a greater extent than any of their neighbors; they were humaner and they were better educated than the other Greeks, and were thus freed from some of the



provincialisms that clogged the growth of the more conservative peoples.

What especially distinguished the Ionians and the Athenians noticeably even among them, was what may be called their intellectual sociability. This was furthered by many circumstances. The city was of moderate size; its population may have been a little more than half a million, but the number of adult freemen bearing arms was only about twenty-five thousand. For every freeman we must count four or five slaves, slavery having existed among the Greeks from time immemorial; and these were often, though not always, not to be distinguished from their masters by difference of race or color; they were, if



FAMILY SCENE.  
(From a Relief.)

not Greeks, generally at least Aryans, although some, to be sure, were Arabians, Egyptians, and Negroes, and were far from forming a separate and hostile caste. There were in Attica about four hundred thousand of these, on whom there fell the duty of performing all the work, while their masters enjoyed leisure. This aristocratic class, it must be remembered, did not live in a period when money-making was the chief end of man; they were free to live, not compelled to devote themselves to securing the means of living. Mere subsistence was simple in a mild climate, and in a society devoid of extravagant tastes. Their houses were mere sleeping-places where the wife stayed and supervised the children and domestic occupations. The considerable commerce in which Athens was engaged was far less complex than

modern business, and the freemen were thus possessed of leisure to devote themselves to intellectual interests.

The Athenian society, to be sure, missed the influence of women. The wife was distinctly scarcely more than a household drudge, the mother of children. The importance of women in the old times as we see it reflected in the Homeric poems had disappeared, and society suffered, as was inevitable, from the decay of family life. The association with *hetairai* brought degradation, and even apart from this it is easy to see that the insignificance of women left its mark in literature; for in Æschylus the women hold an inferior position, and in Sophocles the women have distinctly masculine qualities. In Euripides to be sure, they become more important, but on the whole a



WOMEN AT TOILET.  
(From a vase painting.)

great difference between the Greek and modern literature is in the position that women occupy. The heroines of the Greek plays all belong to heroic times.

Another difference is the way in which modern men derive their opinions from books. When in Athens men were near life; the student with us is remote from life, buried in volumes of greater or less value. Their knowledge was more strictly immediate; ours is necessarily in great measure attained at second-hand. The Athenians too had direct control of political matters; all were directly concerned in the making and administration of laws; they governed without the intervention of deputies. It lay with them to declare and wage wars. In consequence they received continuous political training, of a sort, too, that encouraged their natural disposition to eloquence and

their amenability to reason. It was in conditions like these that Athens became the intellectual leader of Greece. Earlier it had known rivals; Syracuse, for instance, in Sicily, was for a time a main centre of intellectual inspiration. Philosophy found encouragement there, and men of letters were summoned from every quarter. In the colonies on the coast of Asia Minor literature received a start on the termination of the Persian wars, but the most distinguished men of that region became well known in foreign parts. In Greece itself we have seen Sparta offering hospitality to poets; but from this moment it retired within itself and had no part in the intellectual advance, which it had only encouraged by patronage, not by production. In Thebes there was Pindar, but his main encouragement came from Athens; but beyond this there was no movement to be at all compared with this which has made that city immortal.

It has already been mentioned that Simonides was a favorite at Athens, and that Pindar studied there and preserved for that city a peculiar affection which was warmly returned; and from these facts we perceive the growing importance in literature of the Attic capital. It was now about to begin its own work in literature, which was of a kind that Greece had never before seen.

## II.

Like everything else in literature, the Greek drama was not a special creation, but a gradual development out of older conditions. We find a dramatic element prominent in the Greek, as for that matter in all religious rites. Imitative dances, like the Pyrrhic, had existed since a remote antiquity, and in the various festivals we find men personating a god, who were clad in some conventional attire that at once made them known. Scenes from some religious story were represented with appropriate action. In Delphi, for example, the incident of the conflict between Apollo and the dragon



APOLLO SLAYING  
THE DRAGON.  
(From a Coin.)

was dramatically represented, and similar crude performances were found everywhere in Greece. It was, however, in the festivals attendant on the harvest that the religious rites had their fullest expression; for besides the formal celebration

with song and dance, these occasions were famous for the privileges the populace enjoyed of almost absolute freedom of speech. For a moment license was the rule; every one enjoyed the fullest liberty of jesting, as now in certain countries in the carnival, itself a survival of remote nature-worship. Besides this hold upon the populace, the har-



vest was closely connected with the worship of Dionysus, the god of the vine, and so one of the most prominent of the deities who every year won a victory over the antagonistic forces of nature. The vine was this god's gift to mankind, and it was from the rural festivals in his honor that the Greek drama took its rise. The merry-making on these occasions was unbridled, and the complicated myths that had grown up about Dionysus, the miracles that he had performed, presented abundant material for dramatic imitation. Both tragedy and comedy arose from the twofold worship of this god.

It was in both autumn and in spring that he was honored by public feasts. In the autumn there reigned complete joviality; in the spring, when the birth of the god was celebrated, and the new wine was first tasted, more reserve prevailed. On both occasions a song of praise to the god was sung, and from this grew both divisions of the drama. At



DIONYSUS AND THE SEASONS.

the harvest time, when fertility and increase were acknowledged with gratitude, and the symbols of reproduction were carried in a procession with solemn song, ribald jest and ridicule accompanied these rites; this was the origin of the comedy. Tragedy sprung from the dithyramb that was sung in the less jocund celebration of the rites in the spring time. On this occasion the various adventures of the god lent themselves to imitation and gradually to the fuller exercise of the dramatic art.

The dithyramb had for some time been the favorite form of lyric poetry among the Athenians, and it was the one best adapted for the growth which time made necessary in this form of literary expression. It was a complicated form, and it gradually acquired many modifications, both in regard to its rhythmical and its musical components. Lasos of Hermione, Pindar's teacher, had especially developed it, and with such success that his fame quite overshadowed that of Arion, its

inventor. In its improved and richer state it attracted the attention of wealthy citizens, and its performance was encouraged with lavish generosity. In fact it embodied all the qualities of the various lyrical forms and acquired new ones under the skilful hands of Pindar and Simonides. The new complexity of Greek life overflowed the old vessels, just as the Renaissance compelled the introduction of newer and larger forms while yet making use of the literary methods of mediævalism.

The evolution of the drama was very gradual; so far we have found scarcely more than the soil from which the drama was to grow. The first step towards independent existence seems to have been this, that the leader of the chorus became, as it were, independent of his fellows and was able to carry on a dialogue with them. It was among the Dorians that imitative representations began, and that tragic and comic choruses first appeared; the fuller development of both, however, belonged to Attica, and the little village of Icaria bears the reputation of being the birthplace of both tragedy and comedy. Yet this statement, even if true, helps us but little. Amid all this uncertainty we only begin to touch solid ground when we come to Thespis, an Icarian who carried the tragic chorus from his home to Athens, where it speedily took root and flourished. It appears that he gave the leader of the dithyrambic dance a part as an actor who should recite mythical stories without connection with the song in praise of Dionysus. These stories were recited with some mimetic action. Narration such as we find in the epics was admitted, the lyric choruses continued, and thus in Athens the tragedy was evolved from the dithyrambs. Of none of these, unfortunately, have we more than fragments, and in some of the tragic choruses we have doubtless the survival of its older form, so given that we may best judge what it was in earlier times. This recital of old myths which Thespis introduced we may conceive to have developed into the play, while the choruses hand down the religious song. Yet just by what steps the drama was developed is only to be conjectured. Phrynichus (511-476 B.C.) held an important position in the change, but the fact that we know but little more than the titles of his plays renders his services obscure. These show that he chose for writing very diverse legends; thus, *The Phœnician women*, *The Persians*, *The capture of Miletus*, *Actæon*, *Alcestis*, *Andromeda*, *Tantalus*, etc., indicate a wide principle of selection. We are told that he was the first to introduce a female character, an innovation of considerable importance.

Such then is the dim picture of the Athenian stage when Æschylus appeared. The festival in honor of Dionysus was celebrated in the spring time, a goat being sacrificed to the god, and choruses perform-



ing their dances about the altar and the victim. Later, the goat was awarded as a prize to the successful leader of the chorus. The name tragedy (from the Greek *τράγος*, *a goat*) came from the fact that the singers appeared wearing the masks of satyrs and clad in goats' skins. With time the inappropriate masks ceased to be used, but the name remained.

The resemblance between the evolution of the Greek drama and



PAN MASKS.

that of modern times is very distinct; both owed their origin to religious rites, for the unfolding of mysteries and miracle plays from ecclesiastical ceremonies has been clearly shown, and thus both the ancient and modern stage secured an important element of popularity. To be sure the modern drama paid dearly for belonging to posterity by being overborne by the work of the classic stage, while that of Greece enjoyed full independence of literary models; but where this shadow was less obscure, as in England, the development was normal and fertile.

Yet there are religions and religions, and the marked difference between mediæval Christianity and the early worship of Dionysus is so great that the



PANTOMIME MASKS.

triumphed successfully over the barbarism which left its rites, so to speak, as the raw material to be worked by art and enthusiasm into a thousand charming forms. The savage survivals were like the physical geography of the land, tamed, smoothed, cultivated, made inhabitable, modified, not destroyed; and in the other we have a drama growing up

acknowledged similarity of the origins of ancient and modern drama is almost hidden beneath the mass of divergencies. Behind 'one was a past that had tri-



out of the ruins of past civilizations, obscured by contemporary barbarism, if the term is not too severe. And two things more unlike than the worship of Dionysus and the Christianity of the middle ages it would not be easy to imagine, one rejoicing in life, the other animated by hatred of what was the chief inspiration of the early Greek stage. Still the resemblance shines through the difference of conditions, and is no less apparent in the ripening than in the budding of the two dramas.

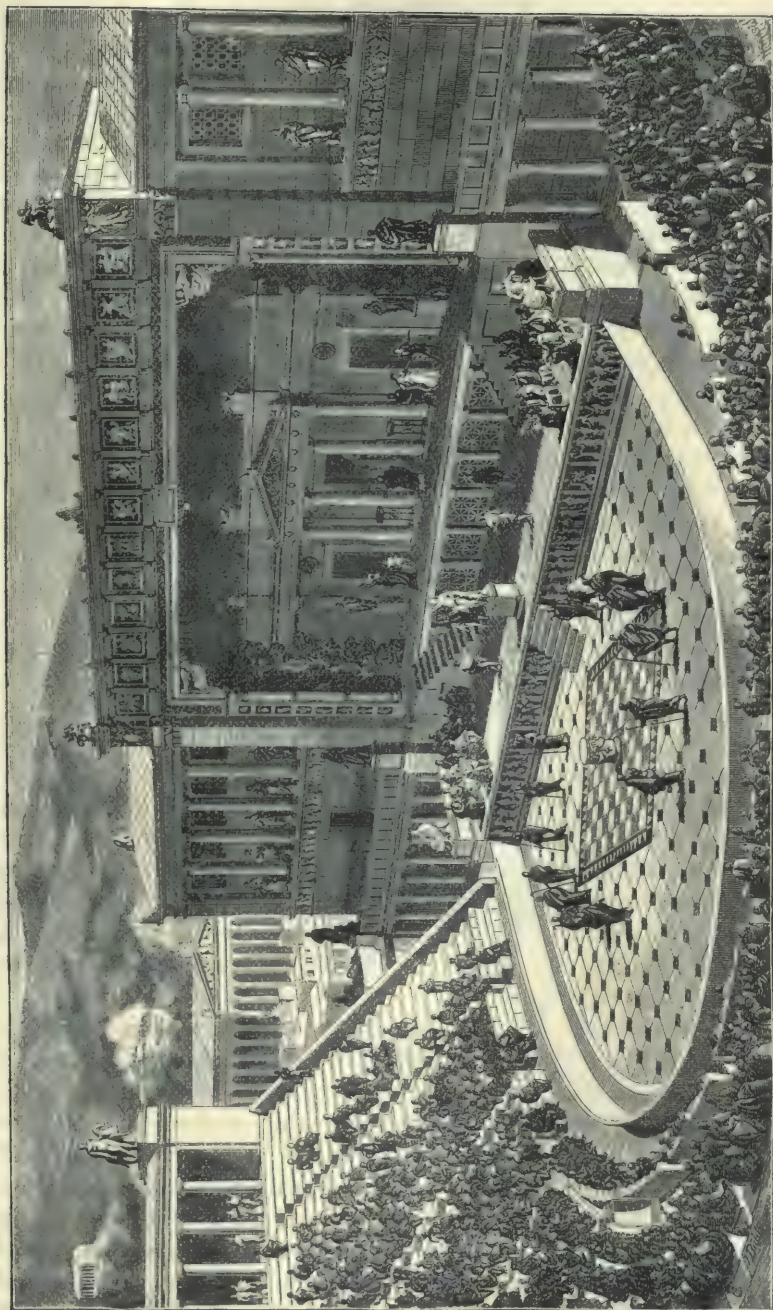
### III.

Before discussing what was done in the flowering time of Greek tragedy, it will be well to consider the mechanical conditions that attended the productions of the plays. The ancient theatres of Greece were large stone structures, built to contain the whole adult free population of a Greek city. They were generally devoid of architectural beauty, possibly because their size baffled the men who above all things loved moderation and proportion. They perhaps despaired of treating the vast bulk of the theatres with success, and, abandoning all architectural effect, contented themselves with making them safe and convenient. It was only in later years and in remote regions, in the Peloponnesus and the colonies, for example in Syracuse, that they were built with an eye to architectural beauty. The Athenians began to build their stone theatre about 500 B.C., after the press of people had broken down the old wooden seats, and it was hurriedly completed; it was without a roof, open to the sky, and the plays were always given in the daytime. If a shower fell the spectators would seek shelter in the passage-ways that ran behind the seats, or they could endure it without interrupting what was really a solemn religious rite. To have shut in the theatre with a roof would have seemed to the Greeks an objectionable thing; the tragedies had a ceremonial significance that demanded this performance in the open air under the very eyes of the gods, and the climate made such protection unnecessary. The spectators' seats were arranged in a semicircle about what in a modern theatre we call the parterre, or, like the Greeks, the orchestra, rising gradually towards the back. The actors wore masks with contrivances for carrying the voice, and with larger faces, so that those even at a great distance could see and hear; moreover, the cothurnus augmented the height of the performers. The use of masks, moreover, obviously prevented what would have seemed to the Greeks the distraction of seeing the varying expressions of the actors' faces. The development of the actor's personal suitability to a part is something of purely modern growth, and far removed from the Greek conception of the

drama as a piece of ritual in which the various performers were as unindividual as at all times are the priests who conduct any purely religious ceremony. Besides, there is always something statuesque about every form of Greek art, which was far removed from modern feelings.

The stage formed the diameter of the orchestra, and was a long, comparatively narrow space, in the centre of which the actors stood. Just back of this centre was an open space, called the proscenium. The front wall towards the orchestra was adorned with small columns or similar decorations, the whole stage resting on boards supported by a stone foundation. The scenery was cleverly arranged according to a conventional model. On the left was a representation of a city, which included a palace, temple, or whatever the play might demand; on the right were open fields or mountains, or the sea-shore, and the side scenes were composed of upright triangles, movable on an axis so that the scene could be changed without difficulty. At the back there were probably many things actually in position that are only painted on modern scenery. If a temple was represented, an altar stood in the proscenium for sacrifices, etc. In the back wall there were one main entrance in the centre and two side entrances; the first for the use of the leading characters, the others for the inferior ones. Besides these, which faced the spectators, and appeared as doors in architectural scenery, there were four side entrances, two on the stage at the inner corners of the proscenium, and two more at the opposite ends of the orchestra. These last were intended for the chorus, but were occasionally used by the actors, who then ascended the steps leading from the orchestra to the middle of the stage. Beneath the seats of the spectators ran a passage-way, through which spirits from the lower regions advanced to the staircase that carried them to the stage. The machinery to support the gods that should appear in the air or to carry away mortals was kept out of sight of the spectators behind the walls on both sides of the stage. Arrangements also existed by which actors could sink into the earth, or houses could be shattered or burned. A tower could easily be set in the back of the stage; in short, the mechanical contrivances were most convenient. When, for example, it was necessary to reproduce the interior of a house, a machine behind the middle entrance projected a roof over the centre of the stage. The curtain rolled down, instead of up as with us. The chorus had its entrances below, in the orchestra, where it remained for the greater part of the time, and where it performed the customary dances. In the orchestra, opposite the middle of the stage, stood an altar-like elevation, of the same height as the stage, called the *thymele*, the survival of the ancient stone slab on which a victim was sacrificed to





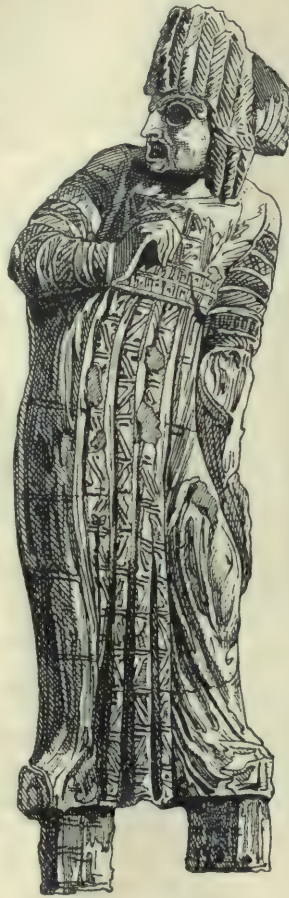
THEATRE OF DIONYSUS AT ATHENS.  
(*Restored from Recent Excavations.*)

To the left, above the spectators' seats, part of the enclosing colonnade. In the foreground, the orchestra with the thymele, then the proscenium, and beyond it the stage with its buildings.



Dionysus. It was around this that the chorus gathered when not taking part in the action of the play, but simply observing the course of events. The leader of the chorus stood on the level surface of the *thymele*, where the first actor of tragedy had stood, to have a clear view of what was taking place on the stage and to converse with the actors. The *thymele*, it is well to remember, was in the centre of the whole building; from it the semicircles of seats were described just as, in the days when the drama was coming into existence, the space where the chorus alternately stood and danced was surrounded by a circle of spectators.

The only connection between the drama and the worship of Dionysus continually appeared in the performances as we have already seen it in the construction ordinary citizens, the actor who took the part of a god or a hero wore this conventional and solemn attire. Moreover, the *cothurnus*, of which mention has been already made, rendered him some inches taller than he would naturally have been. The mask that he wore was larger than life, and to preserve the proper proportions his clothes were stuffed out to heroic size. The mobile Greeks had brought to perfection the art of gesture, and probably the skill of the actors in their movements modified somewhat their artifi-



TRAGIC ACTOR.  
(From an ivory figure in the Fillon Collections.)

of the theatre. The dress of the tragic actors, for instance, was not the simple attire which we find exhibited in most of the Greek works of art, but was rather one modelled after the requirements of the Dionysiac festival. Almost all the actors wore long robes reaching nearly to the ground, and over these were flung vestments of crimson or other striking colors, with trimmings of various hues and golden jewels, such as were usually worn on the days of the Dionysiac festival. While the chorus, who always represented, as it were, idealized spectators, and took but a subordinate part in the play, were not distinguishable by their dress from the

cial appearance in padding and masks. The tragic masks were not wholly unattractive; they were not caricatures, like those of the comic actors; the mouth was open, the eye-holes were large and the general impression was one of solemn dignity. Moreover, it is easier for us to reconcile the unchangeableness of expression with the characters of an ancient play than it would be to endure it in a modern one, and especially in one of Shakspeare's. In the Greek plays we often find a character expressing but one emotion from the beginning to the end, as the Medea of Euripides or the Ajax of Sophocles; in the King Œdipus of Sophocles, the altered mood might perhaps have been expressed by a change of masks, and so with others.

The origin of this use of masks has long been the subject of discussion. In ancient times their invention was ascribed by various



TRAGIC MASKS.  
(From wall paintings.)

authorities to different persons, although Aristotle expressed himself unable to form any definite opinion in regard to the matter. A good reason for his hesitation readily suggests itself, namely, that no one of the early tragedians, to whom the merit was commonly ascribed, did in fact invent the masks, but that these existed as survivals of the paraphernalia of the Greek rites from remote and uncivilized times, such as we now find employed by other savage races, as the American Indians and the Esquimaux. Indeed, the use of masks is widespread among uncivilized peoples; it begins apparently with a dim notion of terrifying or deceiving demons, and soon becomes a formula of worship. It was from this state that the custom appears to have entered the Greek drama. In the ceremonies of the Dionysiac festivals it was usual to stain and disguise the face, and for this purpose first leaves and later linen masks were employed at a very early date. Some of the masks represented animals, as afterwards in the *Birds* and *Frogs* of Aristophanes, in the same way that we now find similar disguises existing in different parts of the world. While the mask is common among nearly all savage races, we may find it surviving in the dramatic



performances of the Chinese and Japanese, and doubtless after going through a very similar experience. The Roman mask appears to have had the same origin, and to have maintained itself down to the present day. In the masques of the Elizabethan playwrights, which were composed after Italian models, we have an undoubted survival of the old custom, which still lingers in the masked ball.

Whatever their origin, the use of masks helped to secure the vivacity of the comedy by furnishing a conventional disguise for its satire, and to preserve the solemnity of the tragedy by maintaining the traditions of the ancient rites; and they were particularly well suited to make more marked the uniformity of purpose that we generally find expressed in a Greek play. In the modern drama the conditions are very different, and we find more stress laid upon individuality and a

far greater variety of action. Thus, in the tragedies of Shakspeare—where met the very different streams of mediævalism and the Renaissance, there was no lack of various moods; the conflict was perpetual between gloom and jollity, despair and hope. In the French classic drama, on the other hand, there prevailed a comparative uniformity, and the majesty of its spirit was long in giving



MASKS.  
(From a relief in Naples.)

ground before modern changes. Its superiority to external details, to the minor matters which are of the greatest importance in the realistic drama, only concentrated the spectators' attention on its real merits, on the intellectual conflict, so to speak, which the dramatist proposed to set forth. Every thing else was of as little importance as is local color in an oratorio; there was an almost complete disregard of anachronisms; Roman heroes wore modern wigs, coats, and boots, and these apparent inconsistencies were reckoned as but part of the inevitable inaccuracy of all scenic representations. The drama always requires some conventions, and the only controlling law is the assent of the audience; in this case it was freely given, and the classic French plays moved after a generally recognized and tolerably uniform fashion that well represented the artificial and somewhat complicated social system of the time, just as modern plays, with their greater attention to minute details and precise verisimilitude, express our interest in facts that may be directly observed.

In its remoteness from minute accuracy the French tragedy bore a noteworthy correspondence to the impersonal quality that the masks



and customary conventionality gave to that of the Greeks; but what in France was an indication of merely the enforcement of certain social and political conditions, was in Greece primarily an expression of religious feeling, which naturally concerned itself but little with what would have seemed the trivial minutiae of everyday life. Yet the Greek tragedy continually yielded to the modern spirit; and while it began under the inspiration of awe and reverence, and throughout retained its original form, we yet see the influence of the immediate business of life making itself more and more forcibly felt. In Æschylus it is remote; in Euripides it is near, and in Sophocles we may see the two inspirations almost equally balanced. The main thing to be noticed at this point, however, is the rise of the drama from religious ceremonial, and the survival of the form then assumed, not merely throughout the Greek tragedies, but even in those of modern times. The Greek tragedy was primarily a magnificent ritual, which, like all rituals, petrified into a lasting form the existing customs of the day where it first took shape; and since these consisted of invocation and lofty language, the dithyramb became the fountain from which the most important currents of later poetry took their rise. Later we shall see its equal influence on the almost contemporary formation of prose.

From the first the actors were not so much individuals as personifications of great contesting principles, abstract representations of familiar conditions; and the absence of their individuality was augmented and preserved from what would have seemed a concession to pettiness by the disguise of a mask. But what was lost in the direction in which the modern mind has worked was gained in impressive dignity; and the importance of the tragedy was maintained by its alliance with the most solemn and baffling questions of mythology.

Besides the actors there was the chorus. This consisted originally of fifty, later of twelve, and finally of fifteen men, who were under the direction of a leader. This leader was at times of service as a sort of fourth actor, when he appeared as a representative of the whole chorus, and discussed matters with one or more of the actors. The whole band, too, lessened the barrenness of the scene. The sense of national property in the drama was encouraged by the fact that all the members of the chorus were private citizens who volunteered their services, practised the songs and dances, in short performed their part in the play from a feeling of civic duty. The position of leader of the chorus fell by turns to different prominent citizens, very much as, at the present time, the calmer duty of heading a subscription list falls on a comparatively small number of rich men. He it was who was deputed to instruct and maintain the chorus, to provide meals for the different members, and to furnish a tripod as a reward for the success-

ful tragedian. The chorus was the representative of the body of citizens; its members took no direct part in the action of the play, they were a band of men who sympathized, warned, praised, or condemned, as seemed most fitting. Their songs were accompanied by the music of the flute, and less often of the lyre, and they uttered them either when gathered about the thymele, or when, arranged in two semi-choruses they descended into the orchestra, and advancing or retreating, or forming graceful groups, they chanted their comments on the deeds of the play. These lyric outbursts, with their formal dances, were something like the interludes between the acts of a play. Then the actions of the various characters were judged, and the tragic feeling, intensified by these solemn interruptions, was supported until the thread of the play was taken up, and it proceeded to its end.

Often, too, it fell to the chorus to take part in the dialogue; in that case the appointed leader spoke alone in the name of all his companions. Their main duty, however, was the performance of



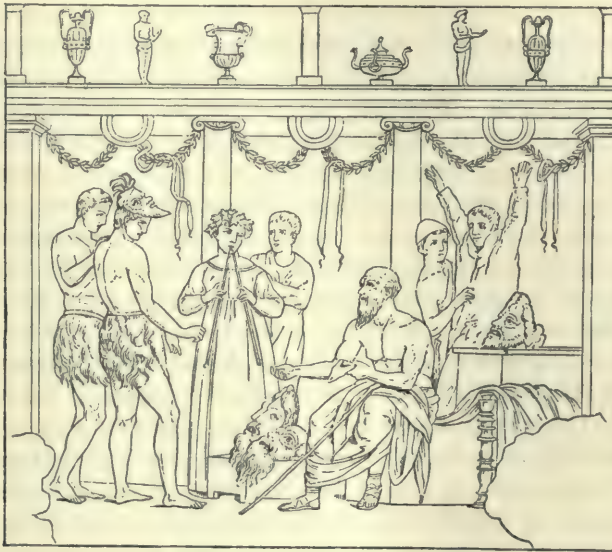
TRAGIC CHORUS REHEARSING.

the choral song and dance. This was their most important function, to be sure; but it is to be borne in mind that in early times from the beginning to the end of the play they were present and a

part of the spectacle; they were not mere performers of an interlude, far from it—they followed every thing that was said or done with curiosity and interest, accompanying the dialogue and action with movement and gesture which occasionally turned into dance; at times, as has been said, they took part in the dialogue, and, as it were, between the acts they gave full expression to their feelings with lyric verse and complicated dance. One of the later changes made by Sophocles was the natural one of limiting the prominence thus given to the chorus, and diminishing its omnipresent interest in the play. The dances, too, became more artificial. The various songs are carefully distinguished. The *parodos* is the song with which the chorus made its first appearance. Naturally, the exact form varied in the different plays; originally the chorus sang a song in honor of Dionysus, but this custom vanished, leaving behind it, however, the measure of a hymn or of a processional song, which were employed for comment on the play. It was sung as the chorus advanced, wound around the thymele, and took its position in the



orchestra. Generally the opening speech, which was called the prologue, indicated the approach of the chorus, which in the *parodos*, as it were, struck the opening note of the play and announced its real ethical significance. The *stasimon* was the name given to the utterance of the chorus later in the play when the stage was empty. These songs served to maintain what we may call the *universal* importance of the plays by their continual reference to the great controlling principles of life; they were not unlike accompaniments of majestic music. They were of practical service, too, in cutting the play into various sections: thus, as has been said, the part before the *parodos*



SATYR CHORUS REHEARSING.

was called the prologue; that between the *parodos* and the *stasima* was the *episodion*, and that after the last *stasimon*, the *epodos*. There was, however, no inflexible system that compelled all the plays to preserve precisely the same model.

Besides these functions of the chorus there were in the tragedies many songs which belonged in common to both actors and chorus. Of these the most important was the *kommos*, a mournful dirge, sung alternately by both. This was generally an utterance of the keen sympathy of the chorus with the sufferings of the characters; it was expressed according to the impressive scheme of strophe and antistrophe and with accompanying dance, the whole producing an effect which is in good part lost upon the reader. In the older tragedies the





*kommos* was commonly at the end of the play; afterwards, in a somewhat modified form, it appeared in the body of the tragedy, and it was free to assume the form of a sort of lyrical conversation in which the intensity of the feelings inspired the chorus with varying emotions that were expressed by small sections of the chorus in brief, disjointed utterances. In general, the history of Greek tragedy shows a constant diminution of the importance of the chorus; the performance was steadily undergoing a change from an almost purely lyrical to a dramatic one.

#### IV.

The author of a tragedy who was anxious to have it acted had first to consult the leading civic official, the archon, in order to secure the services of a chorus. This having been accomplished, the poet cast the actors in the various parts and superintended the rehearsals in person, or made over the task to a teacher of the chorus, a man with the requisite knowledge and experience. Often, too, the poet acted in his own play, sometimes taking the most important part himself. The time for bringing out the plays was during the four or five days of the great Dionysiac festivals, and judges were appointed by the archon to determine the relative merit of the competing poets, and to confer the prizes. The custom was established by Æschylus of offering in competition not single plays, but a tetralogy, or series of four, three of which were tragedies, while the last was a satyric play of a lighter sort, that served the purpose of the modern concluding farce that redeems the seriousness of unrelieved tragedy. The exact composition of the tetralogy is not clear to modern scholars; sometimes the three tragedies were closely related in subject, and represented successive divisions of one myth; at other times there seems to have been no connection between the different members. The humorous tone of the first satyric play marked the frank acceptance among the Greeks of jest and seriousness, as we find it in Shakspeare and his contemporaries. Their union produced a total impression of harmony.

The fragmentary state in which very much of Greek literature has come down to us leaves very many questions practically insoluble, in spite of the constant and ingenious examination that is applied to their study. The growth of the drama is obscure, as are many points in its most flourishing condition; thus, for example, among the perplexing questions that await settlement is that of the constructive symmetry in the separate plays. The refined and well-concealed art of the composition of the choruses is gradually unfolding itself to careful observers, but the particulars, though in the highest degree in-

teresting to students, are too intricate for exposition here ; it may yet be possible, however, to point out similar complexity in the formation of the plays, although the existence of such elaboration—like almost every thing else about the Greek classics, is a subject of hot controversy between angry scholars. In its most general form the statement is simple enough ; it is merely this, that one important law of the dramatic construction of the Greeks is symmetry. We observe it first in the dialogue, in which question and answer are equally balanced, and opposing arguments are held in impartial scales ; and it is strongly suspected that a similar equilibrium is maintained in the longer speeches and scenes.

The derivation of the drama from the lyric poetry which was composed in this way, with strophe balanced by antistrophe, and its various formal divisions, gives the hypothesis *a priori* probability, and the dissection of various passages only corroborates it. It is also in accordance with every thing that we know of the history of their other arts, in which the notion of equipoise is very evident, as in the symmetry of groups in painting, in the pediments of buildings, and later in the pictures of mediæval artists where the composition is most obvious. Thus, to explain by an example, the monologue at the beginning of the Agamemnon of Æschylus, which is uttered by the watchman on the roof, is divided into two parts by the flashing of the flame for which he was waiting. The first half, of fourteen lines, expressing his longing for this sign of the fall of Troy, is subdivided into sections, thus 4, 4, 4, 2 ; and the fourteen lines of the second half that express the joy of the return from that city are similarly divided. And what is here to be plainly seen finds itself repeated elsewhere, in other speeches and scenes, not in Æschylus alone, but also in Sophocles and Euripides. At the best it was not a rigid rule that can be verified by a pair of compasses, but one that suggests rather an involuntary adoption of the best method than deliberate measurement. Such however, is the secret of art that it appears like accidental simplicity ; whereas, in fact, all artistic accuracy is the result of enormous practice and effort, as any one who has seen a great master's preliminary sketches will readily affirm. In the same way, the laws of musical composition elude the observation of the untrained hearer, who perceives only the general effect without recognizing the scientific basis of this complicated art, and in literature it is held by many that any success is but the result of happy accident, or the miraculous product of genius, which is only a manifestation of the inexplicable. The underlying foundation of law, however, may be proved with regard to the other arts, and few can seriously maintain for any length of time that literature alone is exempt from its sway. One of its manifestations may be



taken to be this of symmetry, and its long concealment may be taken as proof of the art which regulated it.

Whether we accept or deny its existence, it is an interesting subject, and only shows the general obscurity that hides very much of the history and construction of the Greek drama. If the supply were fuller, many of these questions would doubtless be capable of readier solution; as it is, we must here as elsewhere mourn the meagerness of our equipment, for what is left us consists of but thirty-three complete plays, seven by Æschylus, the same number by Sophocles, and nineteen, including one satirical play, by Euripides. Of these the earliest is Æschylus's *Persians*, brought out 472 B.C., and the last is Sophocles's *Œdipus at Colonus*, first performed 401 B.C., a few years after the poet's death. Of the great number of tragedians (over sixty) only three, the two just named and Euripides, have come down to us except as traditions. Yet, fortunately, these three were by general assent the most important. To be sure, they at times were overshadowed by other writers, but on the whole their leading position was undeniable. Naturally enough, the highest honors were at different times of antiquity variously given, as they have been transferred from one to another since the revival of learning. Thus, Sophocles was enormously admired during his lifetime, when Æschylus appeared antiquated, and opinion was divided concerning Euripides, and Aristophanes warmly defended Æschylus. Later it was Euripides who most nearly attained popularity by qualities that still divide his readers. In the last century Æschylus was regarded as all that is barbarous and uncouth, and it was Sophocles with his technical perfection who was most admired. Since then men have learned to appreciate more warmly the stern majesty of the father of tragedy. He is the wisest who is capable of wide and generous admiration for all, and escapes the partisanship, so common in literary judgments, that regards it necessary to praise one sort of merit by decrying another. That these three men had somewhat different qualities will be very evident, and is sufficiently explained by their sequence in time. The remoteness and almost archaic dignity of Æschylus was inevitably succeeded by the artistic perfection of Sophocles. A similar difference may be seen by comparing Racine with Corneille, and Sophocles was succeeded by Euripides with his accentuation of a more modern pathos, just as the followers of Shakspeare, such as Cyril Tourneur and Ford, gradually intensified qualities that he presented with greater reserve.

Indeed we may say that the most striking qualities of any writer are those which belong to him as the product of the period in which he lived, and that the differences between any two men living at different dates may be determined with more precision by observing the



general condition of the occupation which busies them both than by examining their personal characteristics. And it is not merely the condition to which they brought, let us say, poetry, that is to be considered, but rather the state in which they found it; what they do with it then depends on influences outside of themselves, not on their personal choice. If we regard simply the words that they use, the statement is obvious enough. Every man employs the vocabulary that he finds awaiting him as he breathes the air of the room in which he writes; he does not, if an American, address his fellow-countrymen in Lithuanian, but in the language of his neighbors. He certainly may employ archaic constructions, just as at the present time writers of verse are fond of imitating old-fashioned French models of composition, but he will not do this unless it is necessary to find some new means of attracting the failing attention of his readers, and then the form which he chooses will be found to be one towards which general attention is turned. Thus, the widening of interests that accompanied the Renaissance required an enlargement of the vocabulary to find means of expression for new feelings, and Latinisms were freely added, as well as archaisms, revived by Spenser for example, who turned his attention to the allegorical romance of the middle ages, but the general influences of the whole period are distinctly marked here, as they are in the contemporary modifications in dress, in architecture, politics and the fine arts. In the same way, the change at the end of the last century, which is called the Romantic revival, was witness of a similar influx of long-forgotten words and phrases that also bore witness to the general revival of neglected sources of inspiration in the once despised past.

What is true of the mere matter of phraseology is true of the thoughts and sentiments. Exactly as *Æschylus* took the most highly developed literary form, the dithyramb, as the basis of his tragedies, the most exalted feelings of the Athenian mind found utterance in those immortal masterpieces, and when we acknowledge that what *Æschylus* uttered with fervor and comparative simplicity became the subject of sophistical treatment at the hands of *Euripides* we shall be far astray in ascribing the change to the quibbling spirit of the last tragedian, and in neglecting to note the unfailing tendency of great movements to lose their force and breadth, and to disintegrate into subjects of what seems less inspired discussion, a change as sure in literature as any fact of physics.

An apparent objection to this manner of regarding literature is the hostility that so often shows itself against inevitable change. If the modification is part of a widespread feeling, why did *Aristophanes* attack *Euripides* in his comedies, just as critics now sneer at unroman-

tic novels? It may be answered, however, that the position which a man's work takes may be likened to a workman's place in the construction of a pyramid. When we examine the past we can perceive the solidarity of all literature, as of the general progress of mankind; the vast unity that is obscure when we are watching contemporary work becomes tolerably clear. We then see that there is nothing wilful in its course, however misjudged it may have been at the time. Then Wordsworth's return to nature was but part of the general rupture with decaying artificiality, which is as apparent in the French Revolution as in the changes in the furniture of drawing-rooms, or in the laying-out of gardens, between the reign of Louis XV. and the beginning of this century; and the same is true of other seeming discordances in the history of literature, which as little needs the hypothesis of miracles as does geology. When men are watching contemporary work that has the quality of novelty, they are apt to be puzzled by its departure from the approved models, and they are prone to urge those who are in advance, who are working on the upper tiers of our imaginary pyramid, to come down and lay their brick where they were laid, in the face of similar opposition, by those who belonged to a past generation. Yet the only position which the workers can take is that which rests on what is already accomplished. The principles which their predecessors established have to be examined, amended, corroborated, or refuted. This is the law of life, and of literature which is but one of the many sides of life, not a thing capable of becoming fixed at any one time in an immutable form. Hence in investigating the evolution of the dramatic work of Greece we are, as ever in studying literature, tracing but one of the manifold paths which the development of the mind of the time followed. Not only do the works of Sophocles and Euripides thus represent the thought of the period in which they live; they also form another instance, as we shall see later, of the tendency of great movements to subdivide into a vast number of minuter questions which complicate and perplex society, just as a great wave of patriotism, when it animates a country, brings up for future solution numberless problems of legality, wisdom, and prudence. Our own history since the beginning of the civil war is a sufficiently clear illustration of this statement.

To be sure, the number of Greek tragedies that we possess is but small in comparison with the vast number that has been lost, yet they are fairly representative of the magnificent abundance of that great period.

## CHAPTER II.—ÆSCHYLUS.

I.—The Life of Æschylus ; His Part in the Persian Wars ; His Career as an Author ; His Death. II.—The Difficulties in the Way of Our Comprehending the Greek Drama—Its Spectacular Effect with the Choral Dances—The Simplicity of the Plot Compared with Shakspeare's Art—The Unities in the Greek Plays—The Absence of Love as a Dramatic Inspiration—The Flowering of the Drama in Athens, Paris, and London at a Moment of Victory. III.—The Earliest Play, The Persians—Its Presentation of Historical Events—An Analysis of the Play—The First Appearance of the Drama in Western Literature—The Prominence of the Chorus, and Diminutive Value of the Actors, and the Archaic Quality of the Infant Drama : Tableaux rather than Actions—Solemnity of Æschylus. IV.—The Seven Against Thebes Analyzed—The Mythical Plot—The Slow Growth of Dramatic Action. V.—The Suppliants—The Predominance of the Lyrical Element, the Crudity of the Dialogue. VI.—The Prometheus Bound—The Possible Significance of the Myth—The Dramatic Treatment—Its Apparent Irreverence—Our Meagre Comprehension of It. VII.—The Oresteian Trilogy, the Agamemnon, the Libation Poems, and the Furies, Analyzed—The Significance of the Dramatic Treatment of Alleged Legendary History—The Ethical Principle—The Simplicity of Æschylus—The Changes Wrought by Time in the Drama.

### I.

ÆSCHYLUS was born in Eleusis, a town in Attica, 525 B.C. His father, Euphorion by name, belonged to a family that had long inhabited this town, which was the spot where were held the Eleusinian Mysteries, obscure rites that lent a solemn significance to many of the myths of the Greek religion. In all of the poetry of Æschylus there is prominent a lofty religious sense, which it may be fair to suppose derived some of its strength from his intimacy with the mysteries. Æschylus took part in all the principal battles of the Persian wars. He was thirty-five years old when the battle of Marathon was fought, on which occasion he was severely wounded, and in the second Persian war he was present at the battles of Artemisium, Salamis, and Plataea. His brothers, too, fought in the same wars with noteworthy bravery. The epitaph which he composed for himself shows the importance that he placed upon his military prowess. He speaks simply of what he did as a soldier, without a word about his plays :

“Athenian Æschylus, Euphorion's son,  
In his last rest doth 'neath this stone abide,  
'Mid the wheatfields of Gela where he died.  
Be witness to his valor, Marathon,  
And also may the long-haired Persians tell  
His courage which they knew, and overwell.”



At an early age Æschylus began to write for the tragic stage; the story runs that he was called to the occupation by a dream at a time when he was guarding grapes. Dionysus is said to have appeared to him, and to have commanded him to devote himself to tragic poetry, but perhaps the many similar tales that are told of famous Greek poets would not pass careful examination by the Society for Psychical Research; this number, if nothing else, argues against their credibility. At first he found success difficult. He wrote in rivalry with Simonides an elegy on the heroes who fell at Marathon, and was defeated. In time, however, he secured a prize for his tragedies. The *Persians* is the earliest of the successful ones that has come down to us. In 468 B.C. he failed to get the prize in competition with Sophocles, but ten



ÆSCHYLUS.

years later he was more fortunate with the plays about *Œdipus*. The relations between the two great poets were of a most friendly kind; both men were unstained by jealousy or envy, and the influence of each upon the other appears to have been most salutary and inspiring. Æschylus's life at Athens was twice interrupted by visits to Sicily. His first visit was of some length, and was probably the result of an invitation from Hiero, who did his best to make Syracuse a place of literary influence by summoning thither men of renown from various parts of Greece. We have already had occasion to notice his

relations with Simonides and Pindar. After returning to Athens and the success of the *Orestes* tragedy, Æschylus went back to Sicily, probably indignant at being charged with indecorous allusions in his plays to the Eleusinian Mysteries. He was acquitted, but the vexation could not be removed. Moreover, the new political conditions doubtless disturbed so zealous a lover of the past as Æschylus, and drove him to what was almost exile in a remote Sicilian town. The manner of his death is again the subject of legend. It is said that while he was seated, pondering, on the rocks, an eagle carrying a tortoise in its claws mistook his bald head for a stone of a convenient size, and dropped upon him the tortoise, in order to shatter its shell. This singular fable inspires every feeling but belief. Perhaps the most intelligent suggestion concerning it is that it arose from misinterpretation of a memorial stone representing the eagle and tortoise as a symbol

of the spirit of the poet freed from the cramping bonds of humanity, cleaving the air like an eagle. Yet this explanation may be an ill-advised attempt to read modern imagery into ancient art. Whatever the cause of his death, the citizens of Gela paid him many honors, erecting a memorial over his tomb, which was long visited by travelers. At a later date the Athenians put up a statue in his honor, and encouraged every one who wished to bring out the plays of Æschylus by contributing from the public funds the expenses of the chorus.

For forty years Æschylus composed plays for the stage, and he is said to have written ninety dramas, including twenty satirical pieces. Of these, as has been said above, only seven have reached us.

## II.

Before taking up the consideration of these plays it is well to remember how very different were the conditions of the Greek drama from those of our own. Every theatrical performance rests on a number of conventions. In spite of many centuries of conscientious effort to do for modern times what the great tragedians had done for Greece, even the most faithful work, as in the French classical tragedy, leaves the original Greek drama incomprehensible, and can not itself be intelligently enjoyed by foreigners. If the rest of the world find even Racine and Corneille remote from their interest, when those two great men drew their inspiration from a study of the classics, and especially of the Latin classics, which have formed the groundwork of all literary cultivation for many hundreds of years, and from their own civilization, which may certainly be readily understood, how readily we may explain the difficulties which stand in the way of sympathetic comprehension of the Greek drama! This bore close relations with a religion that is far removed from our own experience or intelligent conception, and, moreover, it rested on certain fundamental notions which not only do not exist for us, but also elude our study. These differences embarrass us at every step; we use the same words with other meanings when we undertake to describe the Greek stage, and, for example, make mention of the musical accompaniment of the choruses. We do not understand clearly what the Greek music was and what it meant for the Greeks, yet it was this combination of words, music, and dance that formed the Hellenic drama. With us, a play is something so unlike the architectural composition of that race that we are continually baffled. When we read a Greek tragedy we get but a small part of the total impression. Those who have seen one of those masterpieces acted, even under the modern conditions of preserving the actors' faces



unhidden by masks and without the choral dances, have had an opportunity to get a much fuller insight into the general method of the tragedians than any poring over the text could give. Yet even they have but an incomplete perception of the whole, which was an effort to represent human life by a combination of all the existing arts. The exclusion of the actor's personality, the majestic poses of the elevated and enlarged figures, formed a sort of mobile sculpture; the lyric part formed the chorus, and in the predominance given to narration we may perhaps see the influence of the epic poetry brought into union with the other brilliant product of the Greek mind. The whole was made up of a spectacular effect, which is lost to us, in combination with what we understand by a dramatic effect. This last, bearing a burden shared by allied arts, often lacked some of the movement that is required of the drama in modern times. Often we notice its slow, majestic march, its lack of action, which for the Greeks was atoned for by the music and dance. We can understand their method by recalling our tolerance of undramatic slowness in an opera or an oratorio. In the opera what has faded into the twinkling beauty of a ballet was rendered by movements of dignity and grace that recalled to the spectators a host of feelings connected with their most solemn recollections. The music was subordinate to the words, but it was an important part of an impressive whole. Obviously, the ancient tragedy could rest on a very simple foundation; the complexity of its means of expression permitted a certain meagreness of plot; it was, one might almost say, an excuse for long epic and lyrical treatment, and did not, like the modern drama, depend on a complicated action to arouse the spectators' attention. Instead of an intrigue it chose a single fact or a short sequence of facts, and simplified the action where the modern drama would expand and complicate it.

If we compare the Greek tragedians with Shakspeare the difference is at once clear; the ancient poet, taking a plot already perfectly familiar, or even trite, selected but an episode and of that episode merely the crisis, the most vivid moment; while, on the other hand, in Shakspeare what would form the whole subject of the Greek play becomes merely the *dénouement*, and all the earlier part of the tragedy is devoted to expounding and preparing the final consummation. This difference, it will be noted, is a very great one, and it demands very different treatment by the poet, besides inspiring very different feelings in the spectator or reader. We see at once what novel importance is given in the modern play to complexity of plot and the study of character, how priests and kings are elbowed by clowns and boors, how incident and passion are crowded together, all being traits that would have distracted the Greek, for whom a tragedy was a rounded, harmo-



nious work of art, that moved in an ideal region into which nothing ignoble could intrude.

This is, after all, the main difference between the Greek tragedy and what we call our own, although the Shaksperian tragedy is quite as obsolete as that of Æschylus, and it is a difference that the incompetence of the human mind to see more than a single face of the truth makes almost world-wide. It is certainly only labelled, not defined or explained, when we say that the art of Æschylus is idealism and that of Shakspeare realism. Indeed, even if we accept these words provisionally, we must acknowledge that there is much in the work of the English tragedy that is not aptly described by any such term. In the Greek tragedies, the dignity of the language, its remoteness from that of common life, and the general nature of the plan of the plays, with the prominence given to the chorus, form something which is far removed from a picture of human life. The origin of the drama in the early ritual helps to account for this fact, and it long preserved the tragedies from what would have seemed an indecorous perversion of a great religious function. Then, too, the indifference which the Greeks felt for any undue prominence of individuality undoubtedly made impossible any exaggeration of mere personal characteristics. In Shakspeare we may observe the combination of two distinct currents, that of the Renaissance, and that of mediævalism. The first, certainly, was not affected by realism; it was essentially an aristocratic movement, while the quality of mediævalism, which is represented in the Elizabethan plays by clowns, buffoons, grave-diggers, or the populace, is distinctly democratic. What was inspired by the Renaissance is as conventional as any one could desire; the influence of the artificial romances is continually apparent, not merely in the exaggerations and extravagant language, but in the very vigor of phrase which burns in our memory. Hence to speak of Shakspeare as a realist requires that the statement be corrected, for it contains only a fragment of the truth. All the later literature of the Renaissance is increasingly void of realism; it has been left for modern times to witness its growth. Let us remember, however, that the two qualities, idealism and realism, do not demand that they be drawn up in battle-array against each other; both require to be acknowledged and to be understood. It is a meager philosophy that finds in even marked difference nothing but hostility.

Yet it is to be noticed that just as the early modern writers about dramatic literature, as well as the contemporary tragedians, gave by precept and example a great rigidity to the rules of the three unities of time, place, and action, that was unknown to the Greeks themselves, so we are accustomed to read into the construction of their plays an

excessive rigidity of conventions that exists only in our imaginations, that is an academic verdict handed down from one generation to another. Undeniably a great part of our conception of the ancients is a one-sided opinion, in which the authority of their statues in expressing repose has had a very far-reaching influence. In their plays there are moments of superb dramatic outburst that effectually destroy the mistaken notion that their dramatic works are pallid monuments of alternate recitation; flashes of life as intense as any thing in literature stand out in bold relief against the much argumentation that is remote from our interests. Yet it was the coldness of the ancient plays, their use of narration to describe tragic incidents, the abuse of the device of having emotions expressed to a confidant, that found the most persistent imitation in the pseudo-classic drama of the Renaissance, for after all it is easier to copy another's faults than his merits.

Another point of contrast between the ancient and the modern dramatic literature remains to be pointed out, and this is the position of women. The Greeks knew nothing of the modern conception of love, with its enthusiasm, and one may almost say idolatry, dating from the middle ages, and gallantry is the last thing to be found in their plays. Indeed, they excluded every form of personal relationship, which forms the very core of the modern drama; their subjects drew them away from individuals, and from even such social life as existed in a community wherein women held a wholly subordinate position. The origin of the tragedy in religious ceremonial wholly debarred such sacrilege, as it would have seemed to them, and turned their attention to old myths that knew nothing of such minutiae and would have been degraded by them. Yet, of course, even conventionality feels the influence of the time in which it exists, and in the plays of Æschylus we may see reflected the glory of a period in Greek history which was never repeated. The consciousness of the newly formed Hellenic nationality, and accompanying serious moral awakening which attended the momentous successes of the Greeks in the wars with Persia, are the animating principles of the tragic art of Æschylus, in the same way—the comparison is trite—that the new military and naval success of the English under Elizabeth, and the awakening of men's interests in the Renaissance, made its appearance in the flowering time of English dramatic literature, and that the consolidation of French power under Louis XIV. inspired the plays of Corneille and Racine. Remembering that literature is but one expression of the thought of a time, we see that it is simply the resultant of the various forces, past and present, whereof the spirit of that time is formed. No genius, however brilliant, can do more than arrange the material that this shall offer, in a manner that is not created by him, but is itself



derived from attendant influences. Still it must be remembered that these views in no way diminish the value of the man who gives utterance to the sentiments that affect the generation to which he belongs; he must obviously possess the quality that is not defined when it is called genius, but the way in which this shall find expression depends on the accompanying circumstances, just as the language in which an orator shall speak depends on many things over which he has no control.

### III.

Obviously the *Persians*, which is the only historical play that we possess, is distinguished by some qualities that are not to be found in the other mythical plays that have reached us. The poet described contemporary events in which he had himself taken part, but with an



PERSIAN SATRAP.

absence of hostility and partiality that is most admirable. Possibly he was induced to undertake the task by the success of Phrynichus with his play, the *Phoenicians*, which treated of the defeat of Xerxes, and was brought out two years after the battle of Salamis. Six years later the *Persians* was brought out, in 472 B. C.

The scene of the play is laid in the home of the Persian kings, near the royal tombs. The chorus opens the tragedy with a song in which it enumerates the enormous hordes that had marched forth to conquer Greece, and expresses its fears lest they should all be doomed to destruction. The chorus consists of old men, the dignitaries of the country, who are full of anxiety lest some all-deceiving god should have tempted them forth to their ruin,

“ For Até, fawning and kind, at first a mortal betraying,  
Then in snares and meshes decoys him,  
Whence one who is but man in vain doth struggle to 'scape from.”

When the chorus are about to take counsel together, Atossa, the



mother of Xerxes, appears and recounts a dream which had terrified her in the previous night. Two noble women, richly clad, one in Persian, the other in Dorian garments, "both of faultless beauty, sisters twain of the same stock," had stood before her full of anger and about to quarrel. Her son had stopped their contest, and harnessed them both into his chariot. One proved docile; the other, however, becoming violent, shatters the chariot and throws out the driver. Then came forth Darius, and Xerxes, when he saw his father, wailed and rent his garments.

In this incident we have the first appearance of the dream, which was destined to become the perpetual nightmare of later tragedy, yet here it admirably serves its purpose of preparing the spectators for the future horrors of the play. Doubtless the awful significance of dreams was something that the audience felt more or less clearly, and as heaven-sent messengers of impending evil they held a position of solemn importance among dramatic devices. The chorus evidently thinks so, for it at once bids the queen to endeavor to pacify the gods with prayers and sacrifice. The queen, in the ensuing conversation, puts some questions to the old men about this Greece which her son has gone forth to conquer, and the poet takes advantage of the opportunity to draw a picture of the freedom of Greece in contrast with the familiar despotism of the Asiatic monarchy. She begins with a question that Herodotus tell us was actually asked by Darius, and that not unnaturally galled the Athenians, namely,

"But first, my friends, I wish to hear of Athens,  
Where in the world do men report it standeth?"

In the play, however, it must have called forth a grim smile of satisfaction on the faces of the spectators. There are, too, other little touches that must have delighted the audience. Atossa asks:

"What shepherd rules and lords it o'er their people?"

To which question the answer is made:

"They are not slaves of any man, or subjects,"

a remark which makes it clear that the Greeks perceived the essential point at stake in their contest with the Persians. This brief conversation is interrupted by the entrance of a messenger who brings tidings of the defeat of Xerxes:

"O cities of the whole wide land of Asia!  
O soil of Persia, haven of great wealth!  
How at one stroke is brought to nothingness  
Our great prosperity, and all the flower  
Of Persia's strength is fallen! Woe is me!  
'Tis ill to be the first to bring ill news;  
Yet needs must I the whole woe tell, ye Persians;  
All our barbaric mighty host is lost."

The defeat is then recounted in a lyric passage divided between the chorus and the messenger, as may be seen in this extract:

CHO. "Alas, alas ! Sea-tossed  
The bodies of our friends, and much disstained:  
Thou say'st that they are drifting to and fro  
In far out-floating robes.

MESS. E'en so ; our bows availed not, but the host  
Has perished, conquered by assault at sea."

In the use of this form of communicating the news we may see the



enormous influence of the melic poetry upon the early development of the Greek drama, and we shall find other examples in abundance. The drama found ready at hand a language that had been brought to great perfection by the countless lyric poets, who had for centuries been busy in giving ripe expression to complicated thoughts on a great variety of sub-

jects, and their literary perfection almost overawed the dramatists who, at the beginning, were apt to choose the lyrical form as the most complete and hence the best suited for solemn actor, who should enliven the previous dialogue between the single actor and the chorus, but, naturally enough, it was long before the innovation was perfected. The blending of the old and new methods may be seen in this play, for the lyrical introduction is followed by the messenger's narration to Atossa of the circumstances of the Greek victory. Yet such is the vigor of his recital that we scarcely notice that what we



moments. It was only gradually that the dramatic dialogue grew up. The plays of Phrynichus had been composed almost entirely of lyrics ; Æschylus introduced the second



FIGHT BETWEEN GREEKS AND PERSIANS.  
(From the frieze of the Nereid Monument.)

have before us is not dramatic action, but rather description ; we are told that such and such things happened, we see nothing



happening ; and here again we have another instance of the crudity of the beginning drama, and of its further dependence on the epic poetry with its full use of description. The last thing to be acquired was dramatic action, as it was the most difficult. In observing the growth of Greek sculpture we see the same slow attainment of the quality of action. The early statues of human figures represent a man standing solidly on both legs, the face wears a simpering expression, and there is no faint indication of movement ; the figures are as firm as columns. Thus, in the statue of one of the soldiers of Marathon, we are evidently far from the full development of Grecian sculpture, and we notice the same unpliant bulk that characterizes to a less extent the contemporary tragedy ; in both arts the movement was toward the capacity to express ease and fluidity in the place of rigid formality. This tragedy has an archaic stiffness when we compare it with later work of the same sort, but even this is impressive, and these are not criticisms that one makes on reading the play ; the account to the modern drama ; certainly, a dramatic performance in which all the conventions were of a solemn kind was only made more impressive by them.



SOLDIER OF MARATHON.  
(From the Monument of  
Aristion.)

of the battle of Salamis is full of dramatic instinct, and in the next song of the chorus, when the just-preceding anticipations of evil are verified, there is most impressive utterance given to the deepest woe. When to us, remote in time and taste from the old Greeks, these songs, written in a foreign and difficult language, are yet burthened with a solemn majesty, we may in part judge of their impressiveness as they were sung with accompaniments of music and dance before the men who had themselves taken part in the battle and had known the power of "this proud, usurping king of Persia." The conventional rhythmic movement of the choric dances must have supplied an element of majesty and dignity that music lends

When the chorus following the messenger's narration has come to an end, Atossa brings an offering to her husband's grave, and the



chorus entreats his shadow to appear. He at once complies with their request, and explains that the Persian defeat is due to his disregard of his father's warnings, and to his presumption in endeavoring to overrule the sea by bridging the Hellespont—even now, in spite of civilization, similar instinctive dread of modifying the face of nature is not unknown—and he foretells the complete destruction of the Persian army. With warnings against wanton overconfidence he sinks down into the earth. The chorus then proceeds to utter a lament over their former power and glory under Darius, and bemoaning their present condition under Xerxes, when that king enters, a fugitive, in tattered garments, tortured by repentance and despair, and the tragedy ends with a wailing song, divided between the heart-broken king and his faithful counsellors. The long chronicle of the early possessions of Persia, when Darius

“ Ruled the isles  
That lie midway between the continents,  
Lemnos, Icaria's land ;  
Rhodos and Cnidos and the Kyprian towns,  
Paphos and Salamis,  
And with them Soli famed,  
Whose parent city now our groans doth cause,”

and many other places—the list is a long one, and full of names that only intensify the completeness of the Persian defeat—is broken by the sudden entrance of the desperate Xerxes in a manner that brings out most vividly the contrast between the past and present, between the former glory and the terrible defeat of the tyrant, who bursts in upon them thus :

“ Oh, miserable me !  
Who this dark hateful doom  
That I expected least  
Have met with as my lot.  
How stern and fierce of mood  
Towards the Persian race  
God has displayed himself !  
What woe will come on me ?  
Gone is my strength of limb,  
These aged men beholding.  
Ah, would to Heaven, O Zeus,  
That with the men who fell  
Death's doom had covered me ! ”

The chorus take up the same wail of shattered hope :

“ Ah woe, O king, woe ! woe !  
For the army brave in fight,  
And our goodly Persian name,  
And the fair array of men,  
Whom God hath now cut off !  
And the land bewails its youth

Who for our Xerxes fell,  
 For him, whose deeds have filled  
 Hades with Persian souls ;  
 For many heroes now  
 Are Hades-travellers,  
 Our country's chosen flower,  
 Mighty with darts and bow ;  
 For lo ! the myriad mass  
 Of men has perished quite.  
 Woe, woe for our fair fame !  
 And Asia's land, O king,  
 Is terribly, most terribly, overthrown."

And the lamentation proceeds, growing steadily more piteous and uncontrolled :

XER. " Yea, beat thy breast and cry  
 After the Mysian type.  
 CHOR. Oh, misery ! Oh, misery !  
 XER. Yea, tear the white hair off thy flowing beard.  
 CHOR. Yea ; with clenched hands, with clenched hands, I say,  
 In very piteous guise.  
 XER. Cry out, cry out aloud.  
 CHOR. That also will I do."

And so it goes on in a *crescendo* of grief until they finally move off together, wailing and rending their garments.

It is evident that the play does not contain what we understand by dramatic action ; we find rather, besides narration and the direct emotional appeal of the choruses, a series of what we may call *tableaux*, which make up in solemn impressiveness what they lack in movement. There is a grandeur in the vagueness of this and other plays of the same poet that verifies the comparison that is often made between Æschylus and Beethoven. As in the great master of modern music, we find in the tragedian the reflection of an important period manifesting itself by a direct appeal to the emotions through a sort of awful dignity, which is made only more impressive in both by the traces of early conventionality from which they both made themselves free. Æschylus has more frequently than any poet the note of sublimity, and in this play it makes itself felt, as we see in some of the extracts just given from the lamentations of the chorus, in the complete prostration of the Persian power as a direct punishment from the hands of the gods. Their complete defeat is exalted into a manifestation of divine wrath, and the Greeks are elevated to chosen instruments of the anger of the gods. Certainly, this view of contemporary history, as an unfolding of the plans of the immortals, bears witness to an exalted nature in the poet, and to a lofty enthusiasm among his audience, and every thing in the play strengthens the impression, from the ominous misgivings of the elders to their final despair. Let us once more remember how much the play loses in reading, grand as it is, from its

value as a spectacle in which the rhythmic movements of the trained chorus, with their careful gestures, served for a sort of dumb music to accompany the whole tragedy, as they were swayed by every emotion, and deepened the gloom by their continual sympathy. Their value as representatives of the nation is distinctly prominent, and they were treated, as the chorus at this time always was treated, as an important adjunct to the mere mechanical setting of the play. A multitude on a stage is always an invaluable ally to the dramatist, and these being trained to reflect the deeper significance of the play by movement and gesture, they combined to form an accumulation of dramatic



THE LANDING ARGONAUTS.  
(From the Ficonian Cist, Museo Kircheriano, Rome.)

effect that must have been most inspiring. This distribution of the dramatic effect enables us to understand better the toleration of the masks on the faces of the actors; we concentrate the attention on one or two figures. With the Greeks, every thing was subordinate to a grand general effect.

The Persians was the second piece of a trilogy, of which the others are lost. It was in trilogies that the tragedies of Æschylus were always presented, and it is fair to presume that there was some thread of incident or likeness on which the separate members were hung. Just what it was in this case escapes definite knowledge, but possibly



those are right who boldly conjecture that in the *Phineus*, which was the name of the first piece of the trilogy, there may have been some indication of the early conflict between Europe and Asia. *Phineus*, according to the old mythology, entertained the Argonauts on their way to Colchis, and foretold to them their future adventures, and in his prophecies, it is thought by some, he may have mentioned the future wars. In the supposed third piece of the trilogy, *Glaucus*, of which a few fragments survive, the same bold constructors of an absent literature imagine that in speaking of *Himera* Æschylus may have mentioned the defeat of the Carthaginians at the hands of the Sicilian Greeks, as another repulse of the barbarians. It is unnecessary to point out that, if evidence out of the pure ether is wanted, it may be constructed without difficulty by the ingenious. The final satirical play of the tetralogy was a *Prometheus*.

While the *Persians* was thus a play that concerned itself with contemporary history, it is yet to be noticed that in it the local color is not made over-prominent; the Persian names that abound brought possibly no vivid sense of reality to the Greeks, and the general elevation of the subject by the enforcement of its ethical significance, as an illustration of the divine power over the greatest human efforts, gave the play a universal importance. The absence of all exultation over the victory but added to the impressiveness of the lesson, and, in spite of the immediateness of the event, gave the tragedy a place alongside of those that dealt with the traditions of the dateless past, which was the more frequent inspiration of the Greek poets.

#### IV.

The *Seven against Thebes*, which was brought out in 476 B.C., carries us back to the remote regions of legend, but to a legend that was as familiar to the Greeks as is any story of the Old Testament to us; indeed, part of our own intellectual inheritance from the Greeks is the knowledge of these very myths, which to them were packed with deep ethical instruction. It was part of the story of *Œdipus* that this play narrates, and the whole legend was one which the Greek dramatists were continually representing. This fragment of it is somewhat late in the course of the story; in discussing *Sophocles* we shall come to some of the earlier incidents. After *Œdipus* had discovered that he had murdered his own father and married his mother, he blinded himself; his two sons, *Eteocles* and *Polyneices*, at first kept him in confinement, but this imprisonment made him angry, so that he prayed that they might divide with their swords the kingdom they inherited. To prevent the fulfillment of this wish they agreed to rule in alternate

years, and the elder, Eteocles, was the first to rule. At the end of the year Polyneices came to take his turn, but Eteocles refused to listen to him and retained the government. Polyneices departed to Argos, where he married the daughter of Adrastus, the king of that country, and collected a large army under six great chieftains and led it against Thebes, where the seven generals posted themselves before the seven gates of the city. It was at this point that the play opens. It is interesting to notice, by the way, that it secured the prize for Æschylus over Aristias and Polyphradmon, sons of the early tragedians Pratinas and Phrynichus respectively.

The play opens with a long address made by Eteocles to the citizens of Thebes, in which he encourages them to repel the threatened assault upon their city. A messenger then comes in to report that the enemy are making great preparations for the assault, and that the generals are about to draw lots to determine at which gate each shall make the attack. Eteocles prays to the gods for their aid in defending the city, and then goes forth. Thereupon a chorus of Theban maidens enters, who are filled with terror at the perils surrounding them, and pray to the gods and goddesses for aid :

" For now around the town  
The wave of warriors bearing sloped crests,  
With blasts of Ares rushing, hoarsely sounds :  
But thou, O Zeus ! true father of us all,  
Ward off, ward off our capture by the foe."

Later they describe the din of the assault :

" Ah ! Ah ! I hear a din of chariot wheels  
Around the city walls ;  
O Hera great and dread !  
The heavy axles of the chariots groan,  
O Artemis beloved !  
And the air maddens with the clash of spears ;  
What must our city bear ?  
What now shall come on us ?  
What end brings God to pass ?  
Ah ! Ah ! A storm of stones is falling fast  
On battlements attacked ;  
O Lord, Apollo loved,  
A din of bronze-bound shields is in the gates :  
And oh ! that Zeus may give  
A pure, decisive issue of the strife !"

Their wailings are interrupted, however, by the return of Eteocles, who with considerable asperity remonstrates with them for encouraging panic terrors :

" I ask you, O ye brood intolerable,  
Is this course best and safest for our city ?  
Will it give heart to our beleaguered host,  
That you before the forms of guardian gods  
Should wail and howl, ye loathed of the wise ? "

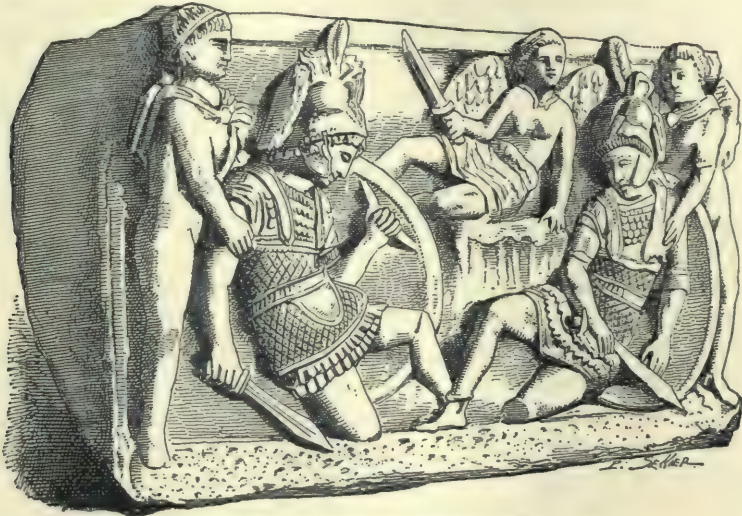
The chorus seek to defend themselves, but Eteocles persists in his overbearing denunciations until he departs to station his men at the gateways against the impending onslaught. His whole tone is significant of the contempt of the Greeks for their womankind. Yet his words had the effect of calming those to whom they were addressed, for after his departure the chorus describe with much more self-control the horrors attendant on the sacking of a city, more as if resigned to a cruel fate than as if hoping divine aid. Indirectly the chorus serves the purpose of pointing out the wickedness of Polyneices in thus bringing an army against Thebes, and the sympathies of the audience are aroused in favor of Eteocles, who soon returns, accompanied by the messenger. The messenger informs him that the seven leaders have drawn their lots, and describes the aspect as well as the shield of each one. Eteocles in turn says which one of his own captains he has appointed to face the attacking leader. Three hundred and fifty lines are devoted to these alternate descriptions of the contending heroes, with brief songs from the chorus at the end of each one. The last mentioned is Polyneices, with whom Eteocles declares that he shall himself contend, in spite of the entreaties of the chorus, who fear the worst.

Here again it is obvious that it is not action which fills this play, but this statement, so far as it may be meant for an objection, falls to the ground before the fact that Æschylus hides the lack of movement beneath what is really the tragic core of the play, the feelings, namely, that animate the city: terror in the chorus and lofty bravery in Eteocles, which are subjects far better fitted for the elevating grandeur of Æschylus than would be any description of a bloody fight. The Greek tragedies abound with instances of the marked effect of the lyric verse upon the later development of poetry, and in nothing is it more marked than in the tendency to portray the effect of the incidents rather than the incidents themselves. Nothing is more true than that in literature, as throughout nature, changes are but gradual, that even those that seem most sudden are prepared by causes that were only hidden, and that growth and decay are the inevitable rule. No man, however great, stands elsewhere than on the works of his predecessors, and he is limited to a greater or less range beyond what they have done. In the descriptions of the various warriors we see traces of the Homeric influence, but this is given a later turn by the dialogue and the intervention of the chorus.

After Eteocles goes forth to face the fate which his father's curse has evoked, the chorus expresses its fears, and soon the messenger returns to tell them that it has been fulfilled; the attack has been repelled, but the brothers have fallen by each other's hand. Their bodies are brought in, and the play ends with a brief lament.



Yet a tragedy depends on the present as well as on the past; the ground must be receptive, and the air propitious, or the seed withers without growth; and in this play we find the poet reflecting the patriotism of Athens, and the emotions called forth by the perils it had escaped from the Persians. Besides these general points of resemblance, there were certain minor details which were not lost upon the audience. Thus, at the passage in which the messenger says, "He wishes to be just and not to seem," the tradition runs that the whole audience turned to look at Aristides the Just, in recognition of its applicability to him. Then, too, the fraternal contest portrayed



DEATH OF ETEOCLES AND POLYNEICES.  
(From an Etruscan Urn in Florence Museum.)

in the play could not fail to serve as a reminder of the treacherous conduct of Pausanias and Themistocles in the Persian wars.

The Seven against Thebes was the third play of a trilogy which recounted the mythical story of the Theban king, but we find in it no summing up of the whole significance of the legend, but, in its place, a melancholy wail over the dreary end, and we receive a definite impression that the drama was yet in a comparatively inchoate state, and was not yet ripe for the full development of all its capabilities; we see this exemplified in the plays themselves, and there is no reason to doubt that what was true of the separate pieces was not true of their combination in a trilogy. All literature teaches us how slow of attainment is the fullest artistic treatment of any subject. What seems archaic in the construction and termination of the Seven against

Thebes may be explained by reference to the newness of the drama, and to the extent in which the lyrical presentation overweighed the capacity for action. All the qualities are to be found in what Æschylus wrote, but a riper art was required to set them forth in their highest value. The great prominence given to the chorus, to the description placed in the mouth of the messenger, indicate that we are back in the beginning of dramatic history. Obviously the drama did not appear at once full grown, but advanced step by step to perfection, and in Æschylus we see the ripeness of the language, and of the expression of the emotions combined with simplicity of action.

His most vigorous utterances lose much by translation, just as every fine phrase is weakened by misquotation. Every generation attaches to certain words a quality that is often lost with time. In Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" the word *forlorn* had at the time the poem was written an aroma of unfamiliarity and novelty of which it has since been robbed by daily domestic use, and this single example of swift modification may indicate what two thousand years have done in blurring the impression that Æschylus made on his contemporaries. To the perfected art of the lyric poets he added an intenser meaning; what threatened to become a mere literary form was made by him an instrument for the study of the most baffling problems that at rare intervals in literary history, as in men's lives, are fairly faced. The origin of the drama in religious ritual gave it a background of universal ethical significance—for the classical dictionary, with its list of indictable offences on the part of gods and goddesses, is as silent on their higher importance as is a modern biography on the loftier merits of the man or woman whose petty weaknesses are recounted at great length. Æschylus and his followers set before the Athenian public the eternal conflict between the divine rule of the universe and the impotent longings of humanity in such a way that the grandeur of the conflict is eternally true. His turbid eloquence, confused by the overwhelming brightness of the vision that dazzled him, is another instance of the absence of the last touch that only refining art can give.

## V.

We find in the *Suppliants* another instance of the remoteness of the early drama from its later development. The date at which the play was written is uncertain, but its construction seems to show that it was one of the first pieces of Æschylus. As we shall see, the play is full of lyrical utterances; the chorus holds the position of one of the actors, and the dramatic movement is at a minimum. The *Suppliants* are the well-known Danaids, or daughters of Danaus, who have fled



from the shores of the Nile to escape wedlock with their cousins, the sons of Ægyptus. They have sought an asylum in Greece, at the city of Argos, whence their ancestress Io had departed long before. The opening scene of the tragedy shows them having just disembarked near sacred ground, offering most earnest prayers to the gods. To them comes Pelasgus, the Pelasgic king, whose aid the Danaids at once demand by reason of the descent from the Argive Io. The king hesitates between the conflicting claims of hospitality and of his duty to shun the war that his assent would probably excite. In his indecision he determines to appeal to the assembly of his people, and at his request Danaus, who holds as subordinate a position in the



ARGOS WATCHING IO, IS BEGUILED BY HERMES.  
(Wall painting, Herculaneum.)

presence of his daughters as does the money-making father in a novel of American life, carries to the city branches as signs of supplication. The king bids the Danaids to remain where they are, trusting to the protection of the gods until he shall return, and then goes away. After a choral passage Danaus returns and announces that all has gone well; whereupon the Danaids sing a long song of thanksgiving. Danaus, however, during their transports, has seen a vessel approaching from which a number of Egyptians land. He bids them to remain while he seeks the promised aid of the Argives, and after considerable delay starts off. In spite of his halting departure, he brings back Pelasgus in time to save his daughters, when the froward Egyptians



are hurrying them off to the shore. A long dispute arises between Pelasgus and the Egyptian herald, which terminates in a declaration of war, and the whole play ends with the songs of the chorus, in which they express their gratitude for the hospitality that is offered to them and their fears about the strife that is threatened. In defense of this lack of action, it is to be said that this play is but part, and probably the first part, of a tetralogy, and may thus be regarded as scarcely more than a first act in which the main lines of the rest are simply indicated. Yet, even with this explanation, it is singularly uneventful. It has, however, merits that give it another value than that of a mere fragment of a lost series of plays. The lyric portions show by their ease and flow how rich was that source of the drama, for they quite outweigh the dramatic dialogue. The importance given to the chorus makes it clear that what we have learned to connect with the stage was yet but dimly known, and that it had a formidable rival in the lyric song. Here is a passage :

“ May God good issue give !  
And yet the will of Zeus is hard to scan :  
Through all it brightly gleams,  
E'en though in darkness and the gloom of chance ;  
For us poor mortals wrapt.

“ Safe, by no fall tripped up,  
The full-wrought deed decreed by brow of Zeus ;  
For dark and shadowed o'er  
The pathways of the counsels of his heart,  
And difficult to see.

“ And from high-towering hopes He hurleth down  
To utter doom the heir of mortal birth ;  
Yet sets He in array  
No forces violent ;  
All that God works is effortless and calm :  
Seated on loftiest throne,  
Thence, though we know not how,  
He works His perfect will.

“ Ah, let him look on frail man's wanton pride,  
With which the old stock burgeons out anew,  
By love for me constrained,  
In counsels ill and rash,  
And in its frenzied, passionate resolve  
Finds goad it cannot shun :  
But in deceived hopes,  
Shall know, too late, its woe.

“ Such bitter griefs, lamenting, I recount,  
With cries shrill, tearful, deep,  
(Ah woe ! Ah woe !)  
That strike the ear with mourner's woe-fraught cry.

Though yet alive, I wail mine obsequies ;  
 Thee, Apian sea-girt bluff,  
 I greet (our alien speech  
 Thou knowest well, O land),  
 And oftentimes fall, with rendings passionate,  
 On robe of linen and Sidonian veil.

" But to the gods, for all things prospering well  
 When death is kept aloof,  
 Gifts votive come of right.  
 Ah woe ! Ah woe !  
 Oh, troubles dark, and hard to understand !  
 Ah, whither will these waters carry me ?  
 Thee, Apian sea-girt bluff,  
 I greet (our alien speech  
 Thou knowest well, O land),  
 And oftentimes fall, with rendings passionate,  
 On robe of linen and Sidonian veil."



THE DANAIDES.  
 (From a bas-relief in the Vatican.)

In such passages as these Æschylus shows his readiest movement and his greatest facility. The perfection to which his predecessors had brought the lyric verse stood him in good stead when he thus enlarged its field, and secured for himself this important ally in dramatic composition. The other constituents of the plays had to be gradually brought to maturity, this alone was found in a complete form, and thus threatened for a long time to outweigh all the rest of the play. Its sumptuousness made it a formidable rival, and the authority that it retained from its long success enabled it for a time to overbalance the cruder charm of the new and comparatively clumsy dialogue. Yet it was the dialogue that developed, while the lyric chorus continually faded away, just as the abstract qualities of the characters in this play were succeeded by preciser individualities. Indeed, it is by no means impossible that in the *Suppliants* we have the earliest of the Greek tragedies ; at any rate the internal evidence inclines in this direction ; all the archaic qualities of which mention has been made lead the

reader to suppose that he has here a very early, and probably the earliest, specimen of the Greek drama. The impression is also confirmed by the thoughts uttered in the play, as well as by the form in which they are set; there is a suggestion of youthful simplicity which presents a noticeable contrast to the magnificent strength and abundant wealth of the greater plays—the Prometheus and the Agamemnon, for example; and the lack of individuality in the personages only makes the impression one hard to be shaken. The King of Argos is an abstract being, a mythological figment, and all the remoteness of personal interest that we are accustomed to associate with the dialogue of a Greek play is to be found in its full splendor here, as this extract will show:

THE KING OF ARGOS.

"But say, what cravest thou, with olive-shoots  
New-plucked, white-filleted, upon our shrines?"

CHORUS.

Ne'er to be slaves unto Ægyptus' race.

KING.

Doth your own hate, or doth the law forbid?

CHORUS.

Not as our lords, but as unloved, we chide them.

KING.

'Tis from such wedlock that advancement comes.

CHORUS.

Deny us, though Ægyptus' race demand.

KING.

A heavy task thou namest, a rash war.

CHORUS.

But Justice champions them who strike for her.

KING.

Yea, if their side was from the outset hers.

CHORUS.

Revere the gods thus crowned, who steer the State.

KING.

Awe thrills me, seeing these shrines with leafage crowned."

At this point the dialogue is varied by the lyric song of the chorus answering the speech of the king, and throughout the simple dialogue bears all the marks of something not far above the condition of experiment. And the dramatic action is far more like the swaying of vast bodies than to any personal movement. The whole impression, however, that is left on the mind of one who remembers the conditions, is of a deep and memorable sort. It is the awkwardness of a massive body that we are called upon to observe, not the clumsiness of an ill-managed.

Yet even in this play, which has received less praise than any written by Æschylus, some of the dialogue is vivid and impressive, as in the scene between Pelasgus and the Egyptian herald. This whole conversation reflects the admiration that Æschylus, with his contempo-



raries, felt for a democratic government, and the contempt of the Greeks for the Egyptians, qualities that must have stood out in bold relief against the remoter, more abstract beauty of the songs of the chorus. The packed, incisive curtness of the dialogue was at first used almost tentatively, but it grew in time to be the more important part of the play with its greater vividness and intelligibility. Doubtless its compactness, every line being filled with meaning, gave to the spectators of the play a continual and delightful exercise in developing the many connotations. The dialogue was a continual intellectual exercise for the audience, and in its gradual development we may see how slow is the growth of simplicity. Direct speech is the last thing learned, and while the tragedy from the beginning abounded in remote allusions and rich poetry, the expression of the direct conflict of two minds in dialogue was attained only with difficulty.

## VI.

While we have so far seen *Æschylus* struggling with the difficulties that clogged the path of the drama in its beginning, we may see in his *Prometheus Bound* his grand spirit treating with comparative ease a stupendous subject. That the play is probably one of late composition is rendered probable by the facility of the style in which it is written, and by the subordination of the lyric to the spoken passages. The choruses are comparatively brief, and, more than this, they have a quality of grace that distinguishes more especially the later form of tragedy as it was developed in the hands of *Sophocles*. The subject of the play is the punishment of *Prometheus* for giving to men knowledge of the use of fire. We are at once in a region that is remote from our ready comprehension, and concerned with a subject that has called forth numberless most conflicting explanations. Many generations of men have been puzzled to know why *Zeus* should have punished *Prometheus* for teaching human beings the rudiments of the arts and the sciences. Still, the notion that the introduction of civilization was synonymous with the introduction of vice and misery is one that has at times seemed to be confirmed by observation, as truly as it has been commonly received without much thought in our own day. The Golden Age has for many centuries existed in the distant past; not only *Hesiod*, but *Virgil* and *Horace*, expressed this view, and the beginning of its decay is very recent. Only the study of savage races has made it plain that barbarism, instead of being, as poets sang, a period of happy, guileless innocence, is really one of terror and anxiety. Yet the belief in the greater virtue of the past dies hard, as is shown

by Mr. Ruskin's recent wail over the evil effects of coal smoke upon the English people and the clouds. For Æschylus, however, the myth already existed, and the first thing demanded of him was that he should not wantonly alter it, and the fact that as it stood the legend required of Prometheus to suffer for his benefactions to humanity furnished at once a tragic subject that appealed to every emotion of piety and human dignity, as will be presently seen.

The origin of the myth was long obscure, and called forth numerous more or less ingenious explanations. Some maintained that Prometheus himself was nothing but an amplification of a forgotten, unimportant person, an Egyptian ruler who built dykes against the inundations of the Nile, an explanation that must have been most gratifying to those unreasonable persons who were averse to reading too much religious feeling into the myths. In the middle of the seventeenth century the interest of the age in love-stories inspired one writer to detect in the Titan a jilted lover, the anguish of whose bleeding heart suggested the liver torn by an eagle. Religious explanations have been very frequently made, and it has been supposed that the self-sacrifice of Prometheus was in fact an unconscious prophecy of the Christian dogma of the redemption of the world. Certainly the coincidences are most striking and interesting, much more so than the veiled scientific instruction which other critics have tried to unfold from the pages of the tragedy. Those, however, who have conjectured that the play was really a lesson in astronomy, for example, have had but a small following. The explanation of the strife between Zeus and Prometheus as a vague recollection of the contest between the later Aryan invaders of Greece and those who were already in possession of the soil still demands other recommendations than its ingenuity.

Yet while the myth when examined directly was obscure and baffling, its secret history became known in the light of comparative mythology, and in the earliest Sanskrit literature was found the missing link to its explanation. Prometheus is but the Greek name of the Sanskrit *pramantha*, a fire-drill (later *pramâthyus*), the name given to the pointed stick by rotating which against a circular disk of wood fire would be produced. The name of this useful instrument which first gave fire to men was personified into that of the Titan who stole it from the gods, and in this tragedy we find narrated one of the very earliest steps of humanity toward civilization, a step that had been taken in remote antiquity, but had left its mark in the picturesque mythology of India and Greece.

Thus the Greeks were free to draw their subjects from these abundant legends, as well as from solemn events of recent history, although the legendary age was that from which they made by far the most fre-

quent selections. No one of them, however, came near Æschylus in the free handling of what may be called divine myths; their splendor, their vastness and loftiness, appealed directly to what was colossal in his imagination.

At the opening of the play Prometheus is brought in chains by two giants, Strength and Force, to a mountain in the Caucasus, or, more exactly, in European Scythia, which stood for the remotest end of the earth. Hephæstus accompanies them to chain Prometheus to the rock, according to the commands of Zeus. As they enter the stage, Strength says:

“Lo! to a plain, earth’s boundary remote,  
We now are come,—the tract as Skythian known,  
A desert inaccessible: and now,  
Hephæstos, it is thine to do the hests  
The Father gave thee, to these lofty crags  
To bind this crafty trickster fast in chains  
Of adamantine bonds that none can break.”

Hephæstus does their bidding, but reluctantly:

“Against my will,  
I fetter thee against thy will with bonds  
Of bronze that none can loose, to this lone height  
Where thou shalt know nor voice nor face of man,  
But, scorching in the hot blaze of the sun,  
Shalt lose thy skin’s fair beauty. Thou shalt long  
For starry-mantled night to hide day’s sheen,  
For sun to melt the rime of early dawn;  
And evermore the weight of present ill  
Shall wear thee down. Unborn as yet is he  
Who shall release thee: this the fate thou gain’st  
As due reward for thy philanthropy.  
For thou, a god not fearing wrath of gods,  
In thy transgression gav’st their power to men;  
And therefore on this rock of little ease  
Thou still shalt keep thy watch, nor lying down,  
Nor knowing sleep, nor ever bending knee;  
And many groans and wailings profitless  
Thy lips shall utter; for the mind of Zeus  
Remains inexorable. Who holds a power  
But newly gained is ever stern of mood.”

Then, urged by Strength, Hephæstus proceeds to his stern task, under compulsion and reluctantly. Thus Strength says:

“Now drive the stern jaw of the adamant wedge  
Right through his chest with all the strength thou hast.  
HEPHÆSTOS. Ah me! Prometheus, for thy woes I groan.  
STRENGTH. Again, thou’rt loth, and for the foes of Zeus  
Thou groanest; take good heed to it lest thou  
Ere long with cause thyself commiserate.”

All the work of riveting and chaining Prometheus to the rock was



evidently performed on the stage with relentless thoroughness, yet the Titan utters no groan. The misery that he suffered is only expressed by the impotent pity of Hephæstus. When the executioners have gone away, and the taunts of Strength have come to an end, Prometheus at last gives utterance to his misery. His long silence in the presence of his tormentors, in part a result of a convention of the Greek drama that forbade three actors to speak together on the stage, and in part a frequent device of Æschylus to make the long-expected words, when uttered, more impressive, kept the audience impatient till he should at last open his mouth. This he does with utterance of a lyric outburst of marvellous beauty :

“Thou firmament of God, and swift-winged winds,  
 Ye springs of rivers, and of ocean waves  
 Thou smile innumerable ! Mother of us all,  
 O Earth, and Sun's all-seeing eye, behold,  
 I pray, what I a god from gods endure.  
 Such doom the new-made monarch of the Blest  
 Hath now devised for me.  
 Woe, woe ! The present and th' oncoming pang  
 I wail, as I search out  
 The place and hour when end of all these ills  
 Shall dawn on me at last.  
 What say I ? All too clearly I foresee  
 The things that come, and nought of pain shall be  
 By me unlooked for ; but I needs must bear  
 My destiny as best I may, knowing well  
 The might resistless of Necessity.  
 And neither may I speak of this my fate,  
 Nor hold my peace. For I, poor I, through giving  
 Great gifts to mortal men, am prisoner made  
 In these fast fetters ; yea, in fennel stalk  
 I snatched the hidden spring of stolen fire,  
 Which is to men a teacher of all arts,  
 Their chief resource. And now this penalty  
 Of that offense I pay, fast riveted  
 In chains beneath the open firmament.”

At this point sweet perfumes and the rustling of wings announce the approach of some divine being, whom he awaits with terror :

“Is it of God or man, or blending both?  
 And has one come to this remotest rock  
 To look upon my woes ? Or what wills he ?  
 Behold me bound, a god to evil doomed,  
 The foe of Zeus, and held  
 In hatred by all gods  
 Who tread the courts of Zeus :  
 And this for my great love,  
 Too great, for mortal men.”

This fear, which is yet not despair, is dispelled by the appearance of the Oceanides, who are friendly deities and come to console him in his



COLOSSAL BUST OF OCEAN.

sufferings. In a lyric passage he describes what he has done and how he has been punished, his gloomy words being continually interrupted by the gentle and sympathetic consolations of the chorus. The whole scene brings out the lofty generosity of the Titan and his solemn fearlessness. One episode is the arrival of Ocean himself, who brings cold comfort by showing Prometheus how he suffers by his own fault :

“Lo! this, Prometheus, is the punishment  
Of thine o’er-lofty speech, nor art thou yet  
Humbled, nor yieldest to thy miseries,  
And fain would’st add fresh evils unto these.”

This species of consolation reminds one of Eliphaz the Temanite to Job (xv. 5, 6): “For thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity, and thou choosest the tongue of the crafty.

“Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I : yea, thine own lips testify against thee.”

Indeed, in these early productions of the Hellenic and Semitic minds, we may observe certain points of contact as well as very distinct differences.

When Prometheus has rid himself of the presence of Ocean, the chorus, in a lyric passage, give expression to their grief, to which Prometheus answers with a long speech, in which he draws a singularly exact picture of what modern science has shown to be the life of men in the Stone Age :

“Like forms  
Of phantom-dreams, throughout their life’s whole length  
They muddled all at random ; did not know  
Houses of brick that catch the sunlight’s warmth,  
Nor yet the work of carpentry. They dwelt  
In hollowed holes like swarms of tiny ants,  
In sunless depths of caverns ; and they had  
No certain signs of winter, nor of spring,  
Flower-laden, nor of summer with her fruits ;  
But without counsel fared their whole life long,  
Until I showed the risings of the stars,  
And settings hard to recognize. And I  
Found Number for them, chief of all the arts,  
Groupings of letters, Memory’s handmaid that,  
And mother of the Muses.”

Yet, although the description might make it seem as if the same story were gone over with undesirable repetition, this fault can not be justly said to exist. Every new scene throws light on a new side of Prometheus ; he shows that Zeus was ungrateful as well as tyrannical, and he brings out more strongly his consciousness of rectitude when he declines with firmness the advice which Ocean gives him that he should let the clemency of the father of the gods be sought. With a



severity that comes near the irony of humor, he suggests that Ocean might incur the wrath of Zeus by interference, and that god takes himself away speedily. The Oceanides themselves, who are first overwhelmed with pity at the recital of his sufferings, are soon intimidated by his audacity. The loneliness of Prometheus is made most vivid. The author's method should be noticed; in this severest of tragedies we are on the very border-lines of comedy, somewhat as we often are in Shakspeare. Æschylus had no difficulty in being natural, even when writing a tragedy, and the directness of speech which we frequently find in his plays—indeed it was characteristic of Sophocles as well—shows how independent were those writers of the rules that have since lent additional gloom to tragedy.

Yet when Ocean has speedily abandoned his notion of interference at the suggestion of possible peril for himself, the Oceanides remain, and the tragedy resumes its lofty flow. Even these faithful friends, however, despair; Prometheus is solitary in the universe, keeping to himself the secret of the future, while the chorus chant their regrets for his obstinacy and his excessive affection for human beings, which has brought him to this apparently hopeless plight.

At this point there is introduced a new episode, which, however, unlike that about Ocean, wherein the character of Prometheus was further developed, foretells the remote solution that time will bring. Io appears on the stage, changed into a heifer—although possibly this form was only indicated—lamenting the persecution she suffers from Zeus. As Prometheus was the victim of his hate, so was she of his love, and she recounts the terrible story of her distress to the sympathetic listeners. Prometheus listens to it, to the recital of her wandering as, stung by the gad-fly that was sent by Hera, she wandered over the world. He also foretells her further wanderings, and announces that by a descendant of hers in the thirteenth generation he shall himself be loosened against the will of Zeus. As suddenly as she came, Io disappears. Prometheus continues to foretell the future fall of Zeus:

“Yea, of a truth shall Zeus, though stiff of will,  
Be brought full low. Such bed of wedlock now  
Is he preparing, one to cast him forth  
In darkness from his sovereignty and throne.  
And then the curse his father Cronos spake  
Shall have its dread completion, even that  
He uttered when he left his ancient throne;  
And from these troubles no one of the gods  
But me can clearly show the way to 'scape.  
I know the time and manner; therefore now  
Let him sit fearless, in his peals on high  
Putting his trust, and shaking in his hands  
His darts fire-breathing. Nought shall they avail  
To hinder him from falling shamefully,

A fall intolerable. Such a combatant  
 He arms against himself, a marvel dread.  
 Who shall a fire discover mightier far  
 Than the red levin, and a sound more dread,  
 Than roaring of the thunder, and shall shiver  
 The plague sea-born that causeth earth to quake,  
 The trident, weapon of Poseidon's strength;  
 And stumbling on this evil he shall learn  
 How different ruling is from servitude."

And later, after the chorus have suggested that the suffering Titan may have yet worse pains to endure, Prometheus adds:

"Let Him act, let Him rule this little while,  
 E'en as He will; for long He shall not rule  
 Over the gods."

When he has uttered this open defiance of the father of gods, a mood to which he has been gradually led from the silent resignation of the opening of the play, through his contemplations of the injustice of Zeus, Hermes appears. The words of Prometheus have not been lost; his direct prophecy of the fall of Zeus has reached the ears of the king of gods and men, and Hermes is sent down to extort from Prometheus his fatal secret. The whole scene is aglow with fiery indignation, and no description can do justice to its vividness. Æschylus alone among poets can command such sublimity, which was begotten in him apparently by the unexpected victory over the hosts of Persia, by the complete overthrow of that power, an event which had all the appearance of a miracle, and exalted the feeling of reverence for the divine powers. Such an issue of what seemed a hopeless conflict made over the existent world and elevated Greece from a subordinate position to one of vast power and responsibility. The first emotion that it called forth was awe, and its reflection is to be seen throughout the work of Æschylus, and nowhere more distinctly than in this majestic play, which treats the most tremendous problems.

Here is the passage, dimmed to be sure by translation, but yet with enough left to show the original force:

HERMES. Thee do I speak to — thee, the teacher wise,  
 The bitterly o'er-bitter, who 'gainst gods  
 Hast sinned in giving gift to short-lived men —  
 I speak to thee, the filcher of bright fire.  
 The Father bids thee say what marriage thou  
 Dost vaunt, and who shall hurl Him from his might;  
 And this too not in dark mysterious speech,  
 But tell each point out clearly. Give me not,  
 Prometheus, task of double journey. Zeus  
 Thou see'st is not with such words appeased.  
 PROMETHEUS. Stately utterance, full of haughtiness  
 Thy speech, as fits a messenger of gods.  
 Ye yet are young in your new rule, and think





HERMES (PRAXITELES).



- To dwell in painless towers. Have I not  
 Seen those two rulers driven forth from thence?  
 And now the third, who reigneth, I shall see  
 In basest, quickest fall. Seem I to thee  
 To shrink and quail before these new-made Gods?  
 Far, very far from that am I. But thou,  
 Track once again the path by which thou camest;  
 Thou shalt learn nought of what thou askest me.
- HERM. It was by such self-will as this before  
 That thou did'st bring these sufferings on thyself.
- PROM. I for my part, be sure, would never change  
 My evil state for that thy bondslave's lot.
- HERM. To be the bondslave of this rock, I trow,  
 Is better than to be Zeus' trusty herald!
- PROM. So it is meet the insulter to insult.
- HERM. Thou waxest proud, 'twould seem, of this thy doom.
- PROM. Wax proud! God grant that I may see my foes  
 Thus waxing proud, and thee among the rest!
- HERM. Dost blame me then for thy calamities?
- PROM. In one short sentence — all the Gods I hate,  
 Who my good turns with evil turns repay.
- HERM. Thy words prove thee with no slight madness plagued.
- PROM. If to hate foes be madness, mad I am.
- HERM. Not one could bear thee, wert thou prosperous.
- PROM. Ah me!
- HERM. That word is all unknown to Zeus.
- PROM. Time waxing old can many a lesson teach.
- HERM. Yet thou at least hast not true wisdom learned.
- PROM. I had not else addressed a slave like thee.
- HERM. Thou wilt say nought the Father asks, 'twould seem.
- PROM. Fine debt I owe him, favor to repay.
- HERM. Me as a boy thou scornest then, forsooth.
- PROM. And art thou not a boy, and sillier far,  
 If that thou thinkest to learn aught from me?  
 There is no torture nor device by which  
 Zeus can impel me to disclose these things  
 Before these bonds that outrage me be loosed.  
 Let then the blazing levin-flash be hurled;  
 With white-winged snow storm and with earth-born thunders  
 Let Him disturb and trouble all that is;  
 Nought of these things shall force me to declare  
 Whose hand shall drive him from His sovereignty.
- HERM. See if thou findest any help in this.
- PROM. Nay, long ago I've seen, and formed my plans.
- HERM. O fool, take heart, take heart at last in time,  
 To form right thoughts for these thy present woes.
- PROM. Like one who soothes a wave, thy speech in vain  
 Vexes my soul. But deem not thou that I,  
 Fearing the will of Zeus, shall e'er become  
 As womanised in mind, or shall entreat  
 Him whom I greatly loathe, with upturned hand,  
 In woman's fashion, from these bonds of mine  
 To set me free. Far, far am I from that.
- HERM. It seems that I, saying much, shall speak in vain;  
 For thou in nought by prayers art pacified,  
 Or softened in thy heart, but like a colt  
 Fresh harnessed, thou dost champ thy bit, and strive  
 And fight against the reins. Yet thou art stiff  
 In weak device; for self-will, by itself,  
 In one who is not wise, is less than nought.

Look to it, if thou disobey my words,  
 How great a storm and triple wave of ills  
 Not to be 'scaped shall come on thee ; for first  
 With thunder and the levin's blazing flash  
 The Father this ravine of rock shall crush,  
 And hide thy carcase, and its rocky arms  
 Shall grasp thee tight and keep thee in thy place.  
 And having traversed space of time full long,  
 Thou shalt come back to light, and then his hound,  
 The wingèd hound of Zeus, the ravening eagle,  
 Shall greedily make banquet of thy flesh,  
 Coming all day an uninvited guest,  
 And glut himself upon thy liver dark.  
 And of that anguish look not for the end,  
 Before some God shall come to bear thy woes,  
 And will to pass to Hades' sunless realm,  
 And the dark cloudy depths of Tartaros.  
 Wherefore take heed. No feigned boast is this,  
 But spoken all too truly ; for the lips  
 Of Zeus know not to speak a lying speech,  
 But will perform each single word. And thou,  
 Search well, be wise, nor think that self-willed pride  
 Shall ever better prove than counsel good.

CHOR. To us doth Hermes seem to utter words  
 Not out of season ; for he bids thee quit  
 Thy self-willed pride and seek for counsel good.  
 Hearken thou to him. To the wise of soul  
 It is foul shame to sin persistently.

PROM. To me who knew it all  
 He hath this message borne ;  
 And that a foe from foes  
 Should suffer is not strange.  
 Therefore on me be hurled  
 The sharp-edged wreath of fire ;  
 And let heaven's vault be stirred  
 With thunder and the blasts  
 Of fiercest winds ; and Earth  
 From its foundations strong,  
 E'en to its deepest roots,  
 Let storm-winds make to rock ;  
 And let them heap the waves  
 Of Ocean's roughened surge  
 Up to the regions high,  
 Where move the stars of heaven ;  
 And to dark Tartaros  
 Let Him my carcase hurl,  
 With mighty blasts of force ;  
 Yet me He shall not slay.

HERM. Such words and thoughts from one  
 Brainstricken one may hear.  
 What space divides his state  
 From frenzy ? What repose  
 Hath he from maddened rage ?  
 But ye who pitying stand  
 And share his bitter griefs,  
 Quickly from hence depart,  
 Lest the relentless roar  
 Of thunder stun your soul.

CHOR. With other words attempt  
 To counsel and persuade,

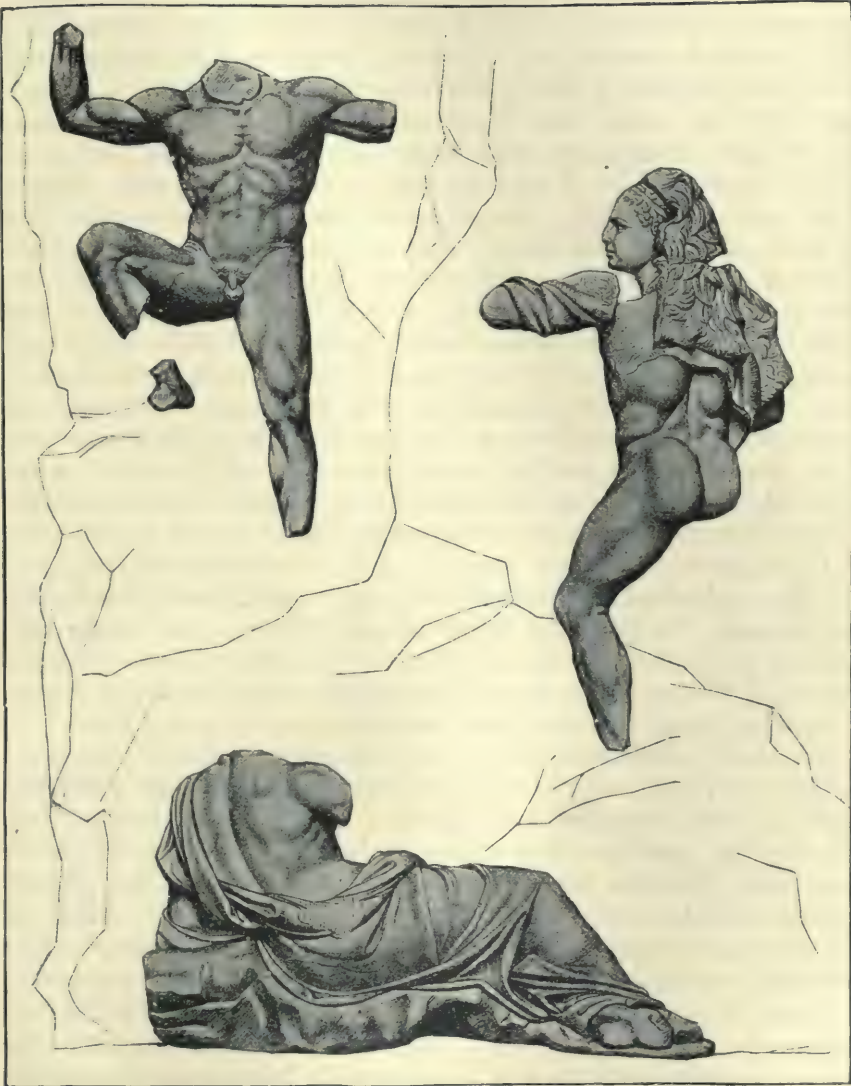
And I will hear : for now  
 Thou hast this word thrust in  
 That we may never bear.  
 How dost thou bid me train  
 My soul to baseness vile?  
 With him I will endure  
 Whatever is decreed.  
 Traitors I've learned to hate,  
 Nor is there any plague  
 That more than this I loathe.  
 HERM. Nay then, remember ye  
 What now I say, nor blame  
 Your fortune : Never say  
 That Zeus has cast you down  
 To evil not foreseen.  
 Not so ; ye cast yourselves :  
 For now with open eyes,  
 Not taken unawares,  
 In Ate's endless net  
 Ye shall entangled be  
 By folly of your own.

[A pause, and then flashes of lightning and peals of thunder.]

PROM. Yea, now in very deed,  
 No more in word alone,  
 The earth shakes to and fro  
 And the loud thunder's voice  
 Bellows hard by, and blaze  
 The flashing levin-fires ;  
 And tempests whirl the dust,  
 And gusts of all wild winds  
 On one another leap,  
 In wild conflicting blasts,  
 And sky with sea is blent.  
 Such is the storm from Zeus  
 That comes as working fear,  
 In utter chaos whirled  
 In terrors manifest.  
 O mother venerable !  
 O Aether ! rolling round  
 The common light of all,  
 See ye what wrongs I bear !

This magnificent termination of what any one might be excused for calling the sublimest poem ever written, with the ringing cry of Prometheus as the earth closes over him, "O Mother venerable! O Æther! rolling round the common light of all, see ye what wrongs I bear?" must have appalled the audience. In these later days the various attempts which have been made to interpret what has seemed the heterodox view of Zeus as a remorseless tyrant, in some inoffensive shape, fail to solve the mystery, because there is too little ground for them to rest on. Inasmuch as the Greeks were not pained by the bitter denunciations of Zeus, we may feel sure that Æschylus was either justified by the legend, or that in the later play of the trilogy, of which





FREEING OF PROMETHEUS BY HERMES.  
*(Fragment from Pergamon.)*

the *Prometheus Bound* formed the second part, a solution was found that enabled the Greeks to endure the apparent irreverence. As it stands, the single play is but a fragment and the rest is in great part a matter of conjecture. A small part of the final number of the trilogy, the *Freed Prometheus*, has come down to us in brief extracts, but these are too few and in too crumbled condition to be of much use. The chorus consists of Titans, the relatives of Prometheus, who have been freed by Zeus from their imprisonment. Other characters are, besides Prometheus, his mother Themis, Heracles, and probably Hermes. The Titans at the beginning greeted Prometheus, who was yet in chains upon the rock, where every day an eagle devoured his liver. The answer of Prometheus is preserved to us in a Latin translation given in Cicero's "*Tusculan Disputations*"; Prometheus endures his hard fate with resignation and longs for death, although he knows that he can not die. In this altered mood may be the secret of the solution; Zeus has already shown clemency in his remission of the punishment of the Titans, and Prometheus bends under his long sufferings. The episode of Io in the *Prometheus Bound* was doubtless justified by the appearance of Heracles, her descendant in the thirteenth generation, who in some way secured the Titans' deliverance after slaying the eagle. Whether the proud spirit of Prometheus was broken, or Zeus of his own choice became clement, can not be positively affirmed, but, apparently, some reconciliation was devised. Probably the generosity of Zeus was met by the submission of Prometheus, who, it should be noticed, afterward wore a wreath of willows as a symbol of his sufferings, and the Greek custom of wearing wreaths at banquets commemorated this tradition.

We can not sufficiently regret the meagreness of our knowledge of this play; and conjecture is idle with regard to the way in which a poet like Æschylus treated the baffling questions and brought into harmony the discords of this myth. It is a hopeless task to reunite his missing tragedies, but what we know of his view of the universe enables us to form some notion of the way in which his mind must have worked. Doubtless, too, the vigor with which the sufferings of Prometheus are portrayed in the play that we have, served to bring out in a stronger relief the reconciliation of this apparently hopeless schism with the divine harmony. The more vivid the dissension, the greater was the poet's glory in appeasing it. The intensity of the discord elevated the importance of the reconciliation, and the more doubtful this seemed at the end of the second play of the trilogy, the greater was the art of the writer who could at last bring it about.

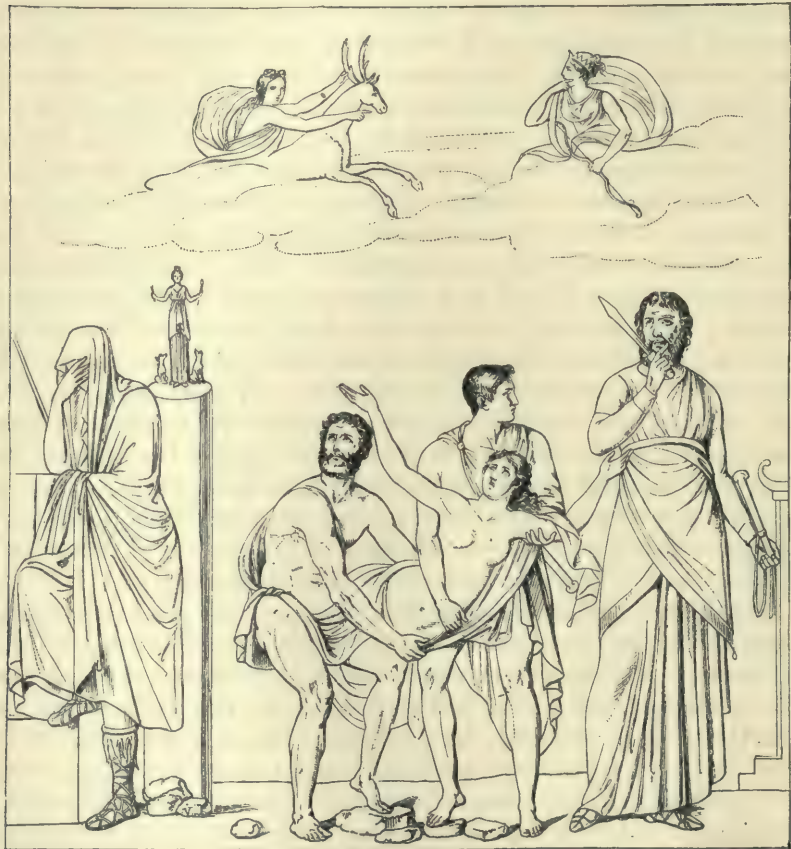
## VII.

Fortunately one trilogy from the hands of Æschylus has come down to us, which enables us to see the relative positions of its component parts with one another, and the final harmony which sets right a long series of misdeeds. This trilogy is called the *Oresteia*, in spite of numerous efforts to give it other and more accurately descriptive names. The plays composing it are the *Agamemnon*, the *Libation-Poems*, and the *Furies*. The accompanying satyric piece, *Proteus*, is lost. It was with this magnificent series of plays that Æschylus completed his work for the stage, and we are hence in condition to judge what was his ripest handling of the drama. We shall notice an advance in the matter of form; action takes the place of reflection as the subject of the plays, and with consummate art the poet calls forth various emotions in the spectator. The early predominance in his plays of the lyrical part is much modified, and, throughout, the style, while thoroughly impressive, has lost some of the exaggeration which marked his earlier work. The three plays, we must remember, were yet shorter than *Hamlet*, and they were not given before men already tired by a day's work, but were presented before an audience that came fresh to the task of judging the masterpieces, and to one that differed from a modern audience in this, that like Shakspeare's spectators it possessed the tolerance of spoken speech that men enjoy who do not diminish their power of listening by absorbing every thing through their eyes in reading.

The first play, the *Agamemnon*, is the one that most immediately appeals to the modern reader. Its foundation in the mythical history gave it to the Greeks a significance which is to us a mere bit of literary information, for the events described are but part of a longer series, the shadow of which lay dark over the opening scene of the first tragedy. Yet its tragic merit does not rest on this remote chain of circumstances alone, however much this adds to the impressiveness of the story. Already before the play begins, evil had accumulated over Agamemnon's head. The line of Pelops had inherited an irresistible tendency to deeds of violence and sudden death. Atreus and Thyestes, the sons of Pelops, left their father and lived at Argos with the king of that country, Eurystheus, after whose death Atreus became ruler, marrying his daughter. Thyestes seduced his brother's wife and was banished from Argos. But after a time, however, he returned to Argos, but clung to the altar, so that Atreus was afraid to kill him. Instead, he planned this trick: he put to death some of his brother's children, and, inviting him to a banquet, gave Thyestes



his own children's flesh to eat. When Thyestes discovered this deed he cursed Atreus, saying that all his house should perish by a like fate. The children of Atreus, Agamemnon and Menelaus, married the daughters of Leda, Clytemnestra and Helen. Helen, it will be remembered, was the cause of the Trojan war. Agamemnon and Menelaus started forth to avenge their wrongs, but Artemis was



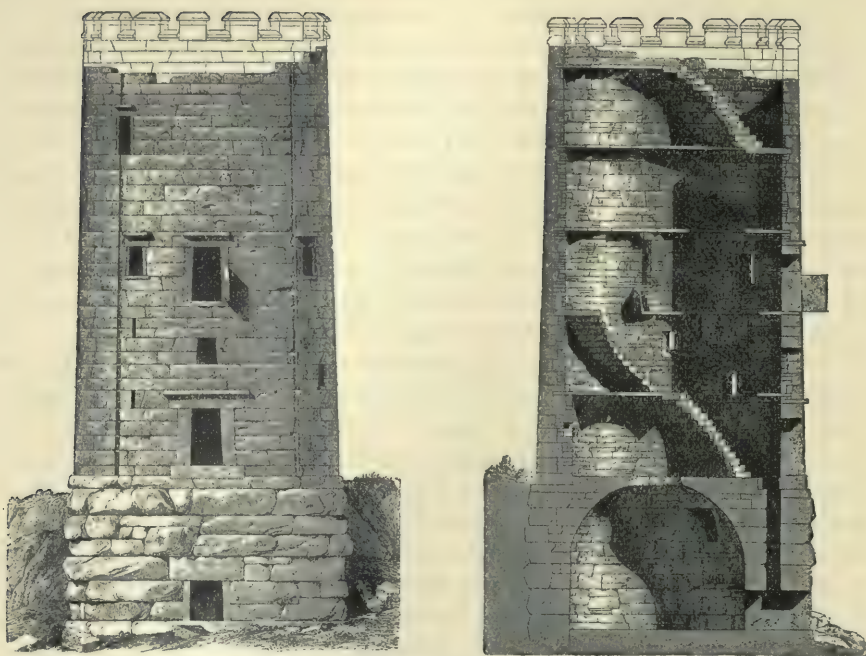
SACRIFICE OF IPHIGENEIA.  
(Pompeian wall painting.)

angry with the brothers and forbade their ships to sail, and for a long time they remained at Aulis. At last Calchas the prophet announced that they could not put forth until Agamemnon should offer up his daughter Iphigeneia as a sacrifice to Artemis. After some reluctance Agamemnon yielded; he sacrificed his daughter, and the fleet sailed. Clytemnestra, the wife of Agamemnon, was enraged

by this deed, and during her husband's absence she had sinned with Ægisthus, the youngest son of Thyestes. This trilogy recounts the further horrors that beset this unfortunate family. Even this account, black as it is, omits many of the details by which guilt was amassed by this wretched race. The very name of any member of it recalled to every Greek a vast mass of evil-doing and of inherited suffering. Curiously enough, the modern doctrine that rests on a scientific basis replaces heredity in the position that it held as a matter of religious tradition among the Greeks. With them it had a supernatural force; in these later days science has robbed it, as it has many phenomena, of its theological bias, but the facts remain, and are no less impressive for being proved inherent in the nature of things.

With the opening of the *Agamemnon*, then, the audience found itself transported to the period of the greatest glory of Greece, when gods and heroes lived and suffered. This heroic past had all the authority of religious and historical tradition behind it, and the combination of the two was indeed impressive. All the most solemn feelings of reverence were nourished, yet without being trimmed into an unnatural, an artificial voidness of human interest. The Greeks enjoyed the same intimate freedom with their religion that we see inspiring the dramatic literature of the middle ages, but with this directness of vision they combined of course an immeasurably superior intellectual power, by the side of which the mediæval gropings for expression are but the prattle of children. And in the *Agamemnon* especially do we find the art of Æschylus in its ripest development. The trilogy was brought out in the year 458 B.C., and is consequently the latest of his work that has reached us.

The opening of the *Agamemnon* shows us the courtyard of the palace of the Atreidæ in Argos. On a tower is a watchman who for ten years has been awaiting the signal lights that should bring tidings of the fall of Troy. Suddenly, while he is speaking, he sees the fire flashing on the appointed height, and he knows that Troy is captured and that Agamemnon is about to return; he hastens away to carry the tidings to Clytemnestra. The chorus of Argive elders makes its appearance seeking information about Agamemnon and his companions. In their song they utter their forebodings of misery that might follow upon the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, so that the minds of the hearers were attuned for the swiftly approaching tragedy. Meanwhile preparations for thanksgiving have been making, and soon Clytemnestra appears to explain the reason. She tells the chorus the good news, already betraying her self-will in her contemptuous treatment of them, but giving a magnificent description of the fall of Troy and of the announcement of its fate by signal fires. Here is the scene :



WATCH TOWER.

## CHORUS.

Thy station, Klytaimnestra, to bid hail,  
 Hither I come. For just it is the wife  
 Of royalty to honor, when the throne  
 Lacks its male lord. But fain I am to know  
 Whether on faith of happy news, or not,  
 Thine altars blaze, propitiating hope  
 That shall be. Yet speak not, if speech seem ill.

## KLYTAIMNESTRA.

From night, its mother, as the saying goes,  
 Fraught with glad tidings may the morn arise;  
 So shalt thou hear, excelling all thine hope,  
 High news, how Argive spears Troy town have won."

## CHORUS.

What sayest? Through lack of faith it hath fled mine ear.

## KLYTAIMNESTRA.

The Achaians Troy have taken. Speak I clear?

## CHORUS.

Joy wins my heart, and prompts the honest tear.

## KLYTAIMNESTRA.

Thine eye bears witness to thy bosom's truth.

## CHORUS.

Hast thou sure tokens that thy words are sooth?

## KLYTAIMNESTRA.

Sure tokens; if some god deceive me not.



CHORUS.

Have flattering dreams this hopeful trust begot ?

KLYTAIMNESTRA.

I trust not, I, the thought of a sleeping mind.

CHORUS.

Dost then believe some wingless presage blind ?

KLYTAIMNESTRA.

Am I a girl, that thus my words you rack ?

CHORUS.

When did the Greeks the royal city sack ?

KLYTAIMNESTRA.

I' the very night whence springs yon dawning sun.

CHORUS.

What herald hither could so quickly run ?

KLYTAIMNESTRA.

Hephaistos, forth from Ida sending light,  
 Thence beacon hitherward did beacon speed  
 From that fire-signal. Ida to the steep  
 Of Hermes' hill in Lemnos ; from the isle  
 Zeus' height of Athos did in turn receive  
 The third great bale of flame. The vigorous glare  
 Of the fast-journeying pine-torch flared aloft,  
 Joy's harbinger, to skim the ridgy sea,  
 Sending its golden beams, even as the sun,  
 Up to Makistos' watch-towers. Nothing loath  
 Did he, nor basely overcome by sleep,  
 Perform his herald part. Afar the ray  
 Burst on Euripos' stream, its beaconed news  
 Telling the watches on Messapion high.  
 They blazed in turn, and sent the tidings on,  
 Kindling with ruddy flame the heather gray.  
 Thence, nought obscured, went up the mighty glow,  
 And, like the smiling moon, Asopos' plain  
 O'erleaped, and on Kithairon's rock awoke  
 Another pile of telegraphic fire.  
 Nor did the watchmen there, with niggard hand,  
 Deny the torch, that blazed most bright of all.  
 Athwart the lake Gorgopis shot the gleam,  
 Stirring the guards on Aigiplanctos' hill,  
 Lest it should fail to shine, the appointed blaze.  
 Kindled with generous zeal, they sent aloft  
 The mighty beard of flame, that streamed so high  
 To flash beyond the towering heights which guard  
 The gulf Saronic. Thence it shot — it reached  
 Arachnes' cliff, the station next our town,  
 Down darting thence to the Atreides' roof,  
 Child of that fire which dawned on Ida's hill.  
 Such was the order of the beaconed lights  
 Arranged before, and in succession swift  
 Each after each fulfilled. The first and last  
 I' the glittering race is victor. This the proof  
 The signal which I tell ye, told to me  
 By my good lord from Troy.

CHORUS.

To the gods, anon  
 My voice I'll raise, O woman ! Now to hear  
 Thy words, and marvel to the end, I thirst.  
 Please you relate, from first to last, the tale.

KLYTAIMNESTRA.

The Achaians Troy have won this very day.

A double din i' the captured city now  
 Roars dissonant, I ween. Acid and oil  
 Poured in one vessel mix not, ye would say,  
 In amity; and so, the diverse cries  
 Of victors and of vanquished might ye hear,  
 Confused, not blent, of triumph or of woe.  
 For these, upon the prostrate bodies lying  
 Of husbands, brethren, or of parents old,  
 With piteous wail from throats no longer free  
 Lament the fate of friends most loved of all.  
 But those the rugged toil of the nightly fray  
 Hath set keen-hungered to such hasty meat  
 As the city proffers, in no ordered ranks  
 Marshalled to banquet, but as each hath drawn  
 The lot of fortune. In the spear-won halls  
 Of Troy they revel — from untented frosts  
 Rare change, and dews of heaven.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the end of her description of the sack of Troy she utters a note of warning :

“ Ah ! let no evil lust attack the host  
 Conquered by greed, to plunder what they ought not ;  
 For yet they need return in safety home,  
 Doubling the goal to run their backward race.  
 But should the host come sinning 'gainst the gods,  
 Then would the curse of those that perished  
 Wake, e'en though sudden evils might not fall.”

This threat, though ominous to the spectator of the play, was lost upon the chorus, whose dull perceptions are clearly indicated ; they only feel the joy of victory, and in a song they recall the origin of the war. Even in this, however, the mutability of man's fate is recalled :

“ Fame in excess is but a perilous thing ;  
 For on men's quivering eyes  
 Is hurled by Zeus the blinding thunder-bolt.  
 I praise the good success  
 That rouses not God's wrath ;  
 Ne'er be it mine a city to lay waste.”

This is a part of the very text of the tragedy that is uttered unconsciously by the chorus, who are the last to have any understanding of the significance of their words. The notion of fatality, a note of gloomy foreboding, is continually appearing through this choral passage, and silently preparing the tragic outbreak. The herald Thalthybios then appears, and, after giving expression to his own personal delight in getting home again, he confirms the good news. He does not omit the miseries of the long siege, and the misfortunes of the returning host, especially the disappearance of Menelaus ; this recital again reminds the timorous chorus of the woes that Helen has brought upon the Greeks. Clytemnestra has meanwhile appeared and inter-

rupted the conversation of the herald and the chorus to boast of her swift and accurate interpretation of the burning beacon-lights, and to urge the swift return of Agamemnon. Here the exposition of the play ends. We see that Agamemnon is flushed with victory and is about to return ; the future deeds are hidden, but ominous mutterings prepare the spectators for his bloody fate. The chorus alternates between personal joy and the abstract contemplation of the vicissitudes of humanity, as in the last song mentioned. Thus :

“ There lives an old saw, framed in ancient days,  
 In memories of men, that high estate  
 Full-grown brings forth its young, nor childless dies,  
     But that from good success  
 Springs to the race a woe insatiable.  
     But I, apart from all,  
     Hold this my creed, alone :  
 For impious act it is that offspring breeds,  
     Like to their parent stock :  
     For still in every house  
 That loves the right, their fate for evermore  
     Hath issue, good and fair.”

These words show clearly the great ethical importance of the Greek tragedy, and are of historical importance as marking the new interpretation given by Æschylus to the study of evil, which hitherto had been regarded as the wayward punishment of jealous gods, who cursed prosperity with an inevitable blight.

While the chorus is singing, Agamemnon is seen approaching in a chariot, with Cassandra in another chariot, and doubtless his entrance was represented as a magnificent pageant, to make more vivid the contrast between his present glory and his swift downfall. The chorus greet him, and he answers in a long speech. Then Clytemnestra enters to welcome her husband, which she does with the request that he will not set foot upon the ground, but only on the purple tapestries which she bids her attendants to lay before him. Agamemnon remonstrates against this ostentatious luxury, asking to be honored as a man, not as a god, but he is overruled, and yields to his wife's request. As he is about to enter the palace, he turns to direct that Cassandra be also kindly led in :

“ God on high  
 Looks graciously on him whom triumph's hour  
 Has made not pitiless.”

As Clytemnestra follows him, she pauses to pray of Zeus that he will fulfill all her wishes, and the stage is emptied except for Cassandra and the chorus. At this point the clouds thicken ; the chorus anticipate the impending doom that is about to befall the returning hero in a



song full of eternal abstract truth, as well as immediately applicable to the circumstances of the play :

"Wherefore, for ever, on the wings of Fear,  
 Hovers a vision drear,  
 Before my boding heart ? a strain,  
 Unbidden and unwelcome, thrills mine ear,  
 Oracular of pain.  
 Not as of old upon my bosom's throne  
 Sits confidence, to spurn  
 Such fears, like dreams we know not to discern.  
 Old, old and gray, long since the time has grown,  
 Which saw the linked cables moor  
 The fleet, where erst it came to Ilion's sandy shore,  
 And now mine eyes and not another's see  
 Their safe return.

Yet, none the less in me,  
 The inner spirit sings a boding song,  
 Self-prompted, sings the Furies' strain—  
 And seeks, and seeks in vain,  
 To hope and to be strong !

Ah ! to some end of Fate unseen, unguessed,  
 Are these wild throbbings of my heart and breast—  
 Yea, of some doom they tell—  
 Each pulse a knell.  
 Lief, lief, I were, that all  
 To unfulfillment's hidden realm might fall.

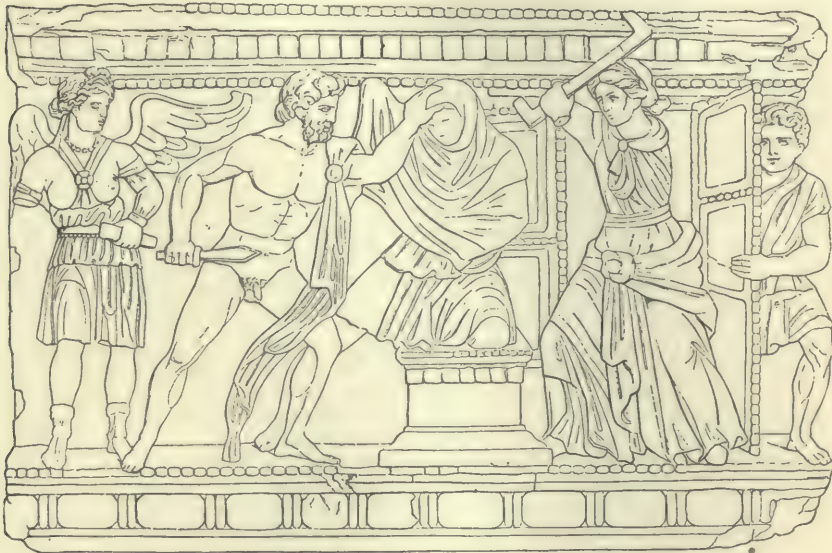
Too far, too far our mortal spirits strive,  
 Grasping at utter weal, unsatisfied—  
 Fell the fell curse, that dwelleth hard beside,  
 Thrust down the sundering wall. Too fair they blow,  
 The gales that waft our bark on Fortune's tide !  
 Swiftly we sail, the sooner all to drive  
 Upon the hidden rock, the reef of Woe."

Certainly the contribution to the drama from the lyric poetry was a most important one, and especially is it elevating in these pieces in which it blended with the dramatic part to form a harmonious whole. Thus what this song indicates makes itself perceptible in the cold insolence of Clytemnestra, who returns to bid Cassandra descend from her chariot and to enter the palace. Cassandra remains silent and simply glares at her persecutor. When Clytemnestra has gone away the chorus try gentler words :

"But I, for Pity sits in Anger's place  
 Within my breast, will speak a kindlier word.  
 Poor maiden, come thou from the car ; no way  
 There is, but this—take up thy servitude."

Thereupon Cassandra, who is cursed by the gift of unaccepted prophecy, bursts forth with cries to the gods, in so vivid contrast with

the gentle words of the chorus that the blood of the spectators must have been nearly frozen. No translation can do this passage justice, can do more at the best than say what is there; to give it again in another tongue is impossible. Before her she sees her own death and that of Agamemnon, and all the woes of the house of Atreus, the fall of Troy, the end awaiting Clytemnestra; with these visions are mingled memories of her own happy childhood, the whole being animated with unutterable pathos. Finally she moves toward the palace to meet her doom, but starts back with renewed horror at the prescience



MURDER OF AGAMEMNON.  
(From relief on Urn of very early date.)

of evil, but conquering this she enters. In a few moments the cry of Agamemnon wounded is heard, and the chorus is filled with senile doubts about what had best be done. Soon the body of the slain king is shown, and Clytemnestra comes, exultant in her crime. She describes the murder vividly and explains her reasons, showing that besides her maternal indignation over the slaughter of her daughter, there was another cause—her husband's faithlessness to her. At the end Ægisthus comes upon the stage expressing his joy at the event, his satisfaction being only marred by the threatening discontent of the chorus. The play ends with vice triumphant, but with the warning of future vengeance. Here is a version of these last lines :

## AIGISTHOS.

O blessed light of this avenging day !  
 Now can I say the unforgetting gods  
 From their supernal height the woes regard  
 Of men, beholding him i' the woven robes  
 Of the Erinnyes outstretched — a sight  
 Most glad — atoning thus his father's deed,  
 Done long ago. His father monarch then,  
 Atreus, in Argos here, after debate  
 For sovereignty and sway, Thyestes drave,  
 My father, his own brother sooth to say,  
 From home and country. But the sad exile,  
 Returning suppliant to the hearth, received  
 Safety and life, that he defiled not  
 Himself his native soil with his mortal gore.  
 But Atreus, the ungodly sire of who  
 Lies there, at the guest-board as a feast of faith —  
 Fiercely, not friendly — set my sire before,  
 When most he seemed the festive day to urge  
 In banqueting, his murdered children's flesh.  
 Himself apart, sitting aloft the deas,  
 Severed the feet and fingers from the trunk,  
 That so, not marking what he ate, he ate  
 A meal accursed, and ruinous to the race,  
 As ye behold it now. But when he knew  
 The horror, he howled out, and backward fell,  
 Sick, from the feast of slaughter ; nor did not  
 Most justly link that violated board  
 With imprecated death to one and all  
 The proud Pelopidæ, that so might perish  
 The race entire of Pleisthenes. By these,  
 By these, ye see him, whom ye see, so fallen,  
 And I it is who this his slaughter planned,  
 Most justly. For me, yet a weanling child,  
 With others twelve, my brethren, forth he drave,  
 And him my woful father. But this day  
 Justice hath brought me back full-grown, a man.  
 And, though afar, I smote him, even I,  
 For mine the plot, the counsel only mine.  
 Happy therefore and proud to fall were I,  
 Who have beheld my foe so basely die.

## CHORUS.

Aigisthos, most the coward's brag I scorn.  
 Thyself, thou boastest to have slain this man  
 Aforethought, and alone to have devised  
 This pitiful murder. Therefore thou, I say,  
 Nor popular doom nor stoning shalt escape.

## AIGISTHOS.

Thou, sitting at the lowest oar, sayest this,  
 When they who row above command the ship.  
 Soon shalt thou know, being old, how hard it is  
 For such to learn, when ordered, wise to be.  
 But fetters and sharp hunger's pinching pain  
 Wondrous mind-curers are the old to teach,  
 Prophetical. Seeing this, wilt not see ?  
 Kick not against the spur, or spurred shalt be.

## CHORUS.

Woman, hast thou, who shouldst have kept the house  
 For those late come from war, his bed defiled,  
 And planned this murder for thy warrior lord ?



AIGISTHOS.

Such words as these of tears the prelude are.  
 The tongue of Orpheus was most unlike thine ;  
 He all things captive led by his joyous strain.  
 Thou, having angered all by yelpings vain,  
 Captive thyself, reverence shall learn through pain.

CHORUS.

And dost thou think in Argos to be king,  
 Who, when thou hadst the hero's slaughter planned,  
 Darest not to do it with thine own right hand ?

AIGISTHOS.

Sure was it that his wife could him deceive,  
 When me he held suspect of old his foe.  
 But by his treasures here his realm to rule  
 Straight I address me. - Who obeys not, he,  
 Even as a bean-fed colt that draws not true,  
 The yoke shall feel right sore. Darkness combined  
 With hateful hunger soon shall see him kind.

CHORUS.

Wherefore, O villain of a coward soul,  
 Not slay the man thyself — but she, the wife,  
 Pollution of the country and the country's gods,  
 Slew him ! Oh, lives there not, somewhere on earth,  
 Orestes, who, returning both shall slay,  
 A great avenger, on a happy day ?

AIGISTHOS.

If so wilt speak, so do, ere long shalt better know.  
 Ready, be ready, friends. It comes, the expected blow.

CHORUS.

So be it. One and all, on every hilt a hand !

AIGISTHOS.

To die refuse I not, but draw the deadly brand.

CHORUS.

We would have thee die ; so hail thy words, that death foreshow.

KLYTAIMNESTRA.

No more, beloved of men, no more work we of woe !  
 To reap this harvest hath enough, more than enough, of guilt.  
 Horror abounds. Then oh, let no more blood be spilt !  
 And ye, old men, to his appointed house each one  
 Away, ere aught of ill be suffered or be done.  
 What we have wrought was fate. But if enough can be  
 Of woes and sufferings such as these, enough have we,—  
 We whom the Daimon's heavy wrath so sore hath strook.  
 These be a woman's words. Who deigns learn, to them look.

CHORUS.

Not for the Greeks it is a coward to revere.

AIGISTHOS.

I shall some time be there, that ye at least shall fear.

CHORUS.

Not if the Daimon bring Orestes home again.

AIGISTHOS.

I know that exiles feed on fleeting hopes and vain.

CHORUS.

Sin ! revel in your sin ! mock justice while ye may.

AIGISTHOS.

This foolery, be sure, right dearly shall ye pay.

CHORUS.

Crow cheerful, like the cock by his hen at break of day.

## KLYTAIMNESTRA.

Heed thou their yelpings not. For I and thou will choose  
The palace how to order best — as monarchs use.

This long description must be excused in view of the importance of the Agamemnon, not merely in Greek, but in all literatures, for the masterpiece of Greek literature has but few rivals anywhere. Even this cold account will, it is hoped, show how intense is its dramatic interest, and what part of this survives the lapse of two thousand years may indicate to us what the play must have been to the original spectators, familiar with the legend, and, more than this, believing in it as a part of their ancient religious history. For a long time commentators have occupied themselves with representing the thought of the time concerning the nature of evil by means of quotations from this and other plays, and doubtless the subjects chosen and the method of treatment prove the wide and profound interest in ethical questions. Yet it is to be remembered that those who look into a mirror find their own image constantly before them, hiding every other object, and sometimes in taking single lines out of their context we run the risk of finding what we wish rather than what the author meant. Nevertheless it is obvious that the seriousness and majesty of the Greek tragedy embalm the thought of the Greeks on the most baffling problems of life. In this play we find the old myth exalted into a thoughtful study of wickedness. In the succeeding ones is to be seen the author's solution.

A number of years is supposed to have elapsed between the termination of the Agamemnon and the beginning of the Libation Bearers, during which time Orestes, the son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, who has been carried away by a faithful servant to save him from his mother, has grown up at the court of Strophios, the king of Phocis, and husband of a sister of Agamemnon. At this place he has formed a close friendship with Pylades, the son of Strophios. When grown up, he is confirmed by the oracle in his determination to avenge his father by murdering his mother. To carry out this plan, he betakes himself in the company of Pylades to Argos, where his sister Electra has remained, suffering much from the hands of her mother, and ever mourning her father's sad fate. It is at this point that the second play begins, the name of which is taken from the chorus, consisting of maidens from the palace, who every day offer libations with Electra upon the grave of Agamemnon. The tragedy opens with the entrance of Orestes and Pylades, who approach the grave. Orestes utters a solemn prayer for aid in his plan, and lays a lock of his hair upon the grave. Meanwhile the chorus of captive women from Troy, bearing vessels for libations, issue from the palace, followed by Electra, and make their way to the tomb, while Orestes and Pylades withdraw.

Electra and the accompanying maidens were arrayed in mourning dresses, and bore every sign of grief. The chorus begins a song of lamentations, and when it is finished Electra goes up to the grave to perform the customary libations, and to offer her prayer; the chorus sing their song of grief. On the grave Electra discovers the lock of hair, which is speedily adjudged to be that of Orestes. It is at first supposed that he merely sent it, and this explanation produces great regret. Suddenly, however, Orestes himself returns, and soon settles his sister's doubts concerning his identity. Electra's swift recognition of her brother's hair, and the corroboration of this judgment by finding the track of his foot to correspond with her own, called forth later the derision of Euripides over such clumsy devices. When Electra first sees Orestes, she fails to recognize him, and he reproaches her:

"My very face thou seest and know'st  
me not,  
And yet but now, when thou didst see  
the lock  
Shorn for my father's grave, and when  
thy quest  
Was eager on the footprints I had made,  
Even I, thy brother, shaped and sized as  
thou,  
Fluttered thy spirit, as at sight of me!"

And he further destroys all doubts by showing her a robe she had herself made for him. All this scene has been criticised for its crudity, and certainly the art of Æschylus was less manifest in



ORESTES AND ELECTRA AT THE GRAVE OF AGAMEMNON.



these simpler relations of two people than it was in the complexer contrast of colossal passions. This becomes clear in the swift outbreak of emotion with which the brother and sister encourage each other to vengeance for their wrongs, and in the solemnity of the invocation when the two are joined by the chorus and unite in foretelling and defending the speedy justice that Orestes is about to inflict on the guilty pair. Orestes exposes his whole plan of action to his sister, and they both leave the stage. The interval is filled with a song of the chorus denouncing the murder of Agamemnon. Then Orestes and Pylades appear, and Orestes knocks at the door of the palace and asks to see some one in authority. Clytemnestra appears; he represents himself as a stranger, and announces to her the death of her son Orestes. She is far from overwhelmed at this news, and goes back into the palace. The chorus outside soon sees Kilissa, the old nurse of Orestes, come out on her way to summon Ægisthus. This poor old woman, in marked contrast to Clytemnestra, is affected by the sincerest grief, and her naïve reminiscences of the familiar incidents of her nursling's babyhood have the real Shaksperian flavor. The episode shows clearly how great likeness there is between the best men; the conditions of dramatic literature in the time of Æschylus were very different from those of the time of Shakspeare, and the framework of their plays attests these differences, but what is more striking is the frequent opportunity that the reader has of observing close resemblances, as in this case.

To go on with the play; the chorus, which is in the secret, bids Kilissa not to ask Ægisthus to bring his armed guard with him, but to let him come unattended; she promises, and leaves the chorus to sing a prayer to Zeus for aid to Orestes. Ægisthus enters the stage in answer to the summons, and, after a few boastful words to the chorus, enters the palace to confront the messenger. The chorus continues its prayer, when suddenly a cry is heard within, and a slave hurries forth announcing the murder of Ægisthus, and demanding the presence of the queen. She at once appears and calls for the axe with which she murdered Agamemnon. Then Orestes comes out, bearing his dripping sword. Immediately there begins an eager debate between them, she entreating for her life, and he avowing and defending his resolution to slay her. Finally, persuaded by Pylades, he drives her within to accomplish his bloody purpose of killing her by the side of Ægisthus. By the laws of the Greek drama, no such deed could be committed on the stage. The chorus sing a solemn song, till the scene opens disclosing Orestes standing over the corpses of Ægisthus and Clytemnestra, holding his sword in one hand, and in the other the wrapper that was cast over his father when he was slain. He

comes to the front of the stage, and the bodies of his victims are brought forward by attendants to the place where Agamemnon's body had once lain. Orestes announces what he has done to the chorus, who are filled with horror, and makes repeated assurances that he committed the act only from a sense of duty. But even now he is horrified at what he has done; he feels the curse that visits the matricide, he begins to rave, and determines to wander to the shrine of the Delphian Apollo, where alone he may find peace. The Furies appear to him, unseen by the chorus, and he rushes away. The chorus sings a final song of uncertainty, and this impressive play ends.

It will be noticed that the interest is in no way slackened, even if we observe a certain simplicity in the dramatic construction, as in *Electra's* recognition of her brother, and in the way that Orestes announces to the chorus his plan of vengeance. The *Agamemnon* contains no such incidents; the whole play is as compact in form as it is rich in passion. Yet in the second play we see most vividly one of the aims of the early Greek tragedy in its very independence of surprise. The incidents are robbed of that accidental quality, and are left to make their own impression, the different parts being united in a vast whole, to which each division is subordinate, as, in the sculpture of the time, masses and combinations of figures were brought together to make a total impression very different from that of separate statues, which were the more



ORESTES KILLS HIS MOTHER CLYTEMNESTRA.



frequent work of later artists. Individuality had not yet received its full development; it was still a contribution to the total force of the play, very much as the separate merits of distinct figures combined to add to the total collections of images in the group upon a frieze. The play, at any rate, possessed to a higher degree the quality of presenting familiar things than that of alluring the spectator by surprise, and it is only the best work that can dispense with the baser attraction. To the Greeks these tragedies must have had very much the same charm that classical music possesses for us, a charm that is not novelty, but the lofty delight to be got from perfect work.

The third play may be described briefly. The action quickly follows that of its predecessor, and brings to a completion the accumulated suffering that had advanced a stage further in the Libation Bearers. Orestes has taken his revenge, but only by adding new guilt; he has performed one duty, but by violating another. If he has obeyed one god, he has offended another divinity, and the *vendetta* might have continued indefinitely. As the end of the last play indicated, he hastens to the temple of Apollo at Delphi, pursued by the avenging Furies; and as he clings in safety to the altar his tormentors lie in a circle about him. At this point the third tragedy, the *Eumenides*, begins. The Furies are the chorus, and it has been said that at the first representation they were fifty in number, but that this multitude was so terrifying to the spectators that the number was reduced to fifteen. Yet, like most positive assertions regarding the classics, this has been quite as positively denied, and some have again affirmed that they were only three in number; but definite information is lacking. However many there were, they were alarming, and Apollo's protection of Orestes in no way modifies their implacable wrath. They really represent the abstract spirit of revenge. Apollo casts them into a brief slumber, during which the Pythian priestess enters to consult the oracle, but the ghastly sight of a bloody-handed man at the altar, holding a bare sword, and the sleeping Furies around him, fills her with the horror which animates her description of what meets her eye. From the background comes forth Orestes under the guardianship of Apollo, who bids the unhappy hero to hasten to Athens, the city of Pallas, where his cause shall be judged. As soon as he is gone, the ghost of Clytemnestra, doomed to endless wandering in the shades, appears and bitterly chides the Furies for the remissness of their watch:

"Awake and hear  
My plaint of dead men's hate intolerable,  
Me, sternly slain by them that should have loved,  
Me doth no God arouse him to avenge,  
Hewn down in blood by matricidal hands.  
Mark ye these wounds from which the heart's blood ran,  
And by whose hand, bethink ye?"



And when the Furies half waking mutter and cry in their sleep, she urges them still further :

“Up! thrill your heart  
With the just tidings of my tongue—such words  
Are as a spur to purpose firmly held,  
Blow forth on him the breath of wrath and blood,  
Scorch him with wreck of fire that burns in you,  
Waste him with new pursuit—swift, hound him down.”

Their awakening, which was the occasion of the terror mentioned above, must have been a most impressive spectacle, and doubtless every adjunct of art was brought to aid the vision of relentless wrath. The song of the chorus expresses their keen regret that their prey has escaped them, and it gradually turns to a denunciation of the younger gods, and notably of Apollo for his disregard of the Fates. But in the hottest of their song the god Apollo appears, and bids them to depart.

“Out! I command you. Out from this my home.  
Haste, tarry not! Out from the mystic shrine,  
Lest thy lot be to take into thy breast  
The winged bright dart, that from my golden string  
Speeds hissing as a snake.”

Here again the entrance of the god, silencing the bold Furies, offered an admirable chance for striking dramatic effect. The contrast was great between the terrifying fiends with the confused and confusing denunciations of their song, and the majestic, awe-inspiring command of the suddenly appearing god, whose words were doubtless accompanied by an authoritative gesture. It was in passages like this doubtless that the artistic arrangement of the actors on the Greek stage was most carefully arranged, and that the opportunity for a magnificent tableau was used in the fullest measure. Here the god, after silencing the song of the Furies and bidding them leave his sanctuary, listens, for a few moments, to their arguments, in which they take a much more reasonable ground, and they part from Apollo almost as friends. They say :

“Great thy name among the thrones of Zeus;  
But I, his mother's blood constraining me,  
Will this man chase, and track him like a hound.”

To which he answers :

“And I will help him and my suppliant free;  
For dreadful among gods and mortals too  
The suppliant's curse, should I abandon him.”

But this deliberate statement of the tragic conflict soon yields to far intenser feelings. There is a change of scene at this point, for the

Greeks cared as little for the imaginary unities of time and place when these were in their way as did Shakspeare himself, and the spectator saw the Acropolis before him, with Orestes, after long travels, supplicating the aid of Pallas Athene. Almost immediately the Furies track him, and their song is one of the most magnificent things that Æschylus ever composed.

Thee not Apollo nor Athena's strength  
Can save from perishing, a castaway  
Amid the lost, where no delight shall meet  
Thy soul — a bloodless prey of nether powers,  
A shadow among shadows. Answerest thou  
Nothing? Dost cast away my words with scorn —  
Thou, prey prepared and dedicate to me?  
Not as a victim slain upon the shrine,  
But living shalt thou see thy flesh my food.  
Hear now the binding chant that makes thee mine.

Weave the weird dance — behold, the hour  
To utter forth the chant of hell,  
Our sway among mankind to tell,  
The guidance of our power.  
Of justice are we ministers,  
And whosoe'er of men may stand  
Lifting a pure, unsullied hand,  
That man no doom of ours incurs,  
And walks thro' all his mortal path  
Untouched by woe, unharmed by wrath.  
But if, as yonder man, he hath  
Blood-dropping hands he strives to hide,  
We stand avengers at his side,  
Decreeing, *Thou hast wronged the dead:*  
*We are doom's witnesses to thee.*  
The price of blood his hands have shed  
We wring from him; in life, in death,  
Hard at his side are we!

Night, Mother Night, who brought me forth, a torment  
To living men and dead,  
Hear me, O hear! By Leto's stripling son  
I am dishonorèd!  
He hath ta'en from me him who cowers in refuge,  
To me made consecrate —  
A chosen victim, him who slew his mother,  
Given o'er to me and fate.

Hear the hymn of hell,  
O'er the victim sounding —  
Chant of frenzy, chant of ill,  
Sense and will confounding!  
Round the soul entwining  
Without lute or lyre —  
Soul in madness pining,  
Wasting as with fire!

Fate, all pervading fate, for me this work hath woven,  
 That I should bide therein :  
 Whosoe'er of mortals, made perverse and lawless,  
 Is stained with blood of kin,  
 By his side are we, and hunt him ever onward,  
 Till to the silent land,  
 The realm of death, he cometh ; neither yonder  
 In freedom shall he stand.

Hear the hymn of hell,  
 O'er the victim sounding —  
 Chant of frenzy, chant of ill,  
 Sense and will confounding !  
 Round the soul entwining  
 Without lute or lyre —  
 Soul in madness pining,  
 Wasting as with fire !

When from womb of Night we sprang, on us this labor  
 Was laid and shall abide.  
 Gods immortal are ye, yet beware ye touch not  
 That which is our pride.  
 None may come beside us gathered round the blood-feast —  
 For us no garments white  
 Gleam for a festal day ; for us a darker fate is,  
 Another darker rite !  
 That is mine hour when falls an ancient line —  
 When in the household's heart  
 The god of blood doth slay by kindred hands —  
 Then do we bear our part :  
 On him who slays we sweep with chasing cry :  
 Though he be triply strong,  
 We wear and waste him ; blood atones for blood,  
 New pain for ancient wrong.  
 I hold this task — 'tis mine, and not another's,  
 The very gods on high,  
 Though they can silence and annul the prayers  
 Of those who on us cry,  
 They may not strive with us who stand apart,  
 A race by Zeus abhorr'd,  
 Blood-bolter'd, held unworthy of the council  
 And converse of heaven's lord !  
 'Therefore, the more I leap upon my prey —  
 Upon their head I bound.  
 My foot is hard ; as one that trips a runner  
 I cast them to the ground,  
 Yea, to the depth of doom intolerable ;  
 And they who erst were great,  
 And upon earth held high their pride and glory,  
 Are brought to low estate.  
 In underworld they waste and are diminished,  
 The while around them fleet  
 Dark wavings of my robes, and, subtly woven,  
 The paces of my feet.

Who falls infatuate, he sees not neither knows he  
 That we are at his side,  
 So closely round about him, darkly flitting,  
 The cloud of guilt doth glide.



Heavily 'tis uttered, how round his hearthstone  
 The mirk of hell doth rise.  
 Stern and fixed the law is ; we have hands t'achieve it,  
 Cunning to devise.  
 Queens are we and mindful of our solemn vengeance ;  
 Not by tear or prayer  
 Shall a man avert it. In unhonored darkness,  
 Far from gods, we fare,  
 Lit unto our task with torch of sunless regions ;  
 And o'er a deadly way —  
 Deadly to the living as to those who see not  
 Life and light of day —  
 Hunt we and press onward. Who of mortals hearing  
 Doth not quake for awe,  
 Hearing all that fate thro' hand of God hath given us  
 For ordinance and law ?  
 Yea, this right to us, in dark abysm and backward  
 Of ages it befell !  
 None shall wrong mine office, tho' in nether regions  
 And sunless dark I dwell.

At the end of this superb choral song, Athene, who heard it far off, returned in order to seek some explanation.

Who are ye ? of all I ask,  
 And of this stranger to my statue clinging.  
 But ye — your shape is like no human form,  
 Like to no goddess whom the gods behold,  
 Like to no shape which mortal women wear.

Here again we notice the composure of a divinity in contrast with the wild excitement the chorus had just shown, which now resolves itself into the more deliberate utterance of dialogue, each party compressing its speech into a single line after the usual habit. Nowhere was the directness that characterized the Greek mind more conspicuous than in these swift interchanges of repartee. Every speech was like a single thrust of a rapier ; profusion of words was unknown. In a dialogue of this compact form, Athene and the chorus arrange that the conflict which seemed to be without an issue should be brought to final judgment. Orestes agrees, and Athene leaves to secure the judges. The chorus, as if foreseeing their defeat, mourn the blow that will be given to the stern morality which they enforce, until Athene returns with the judges. A herald, at her command, convokes the populace with a blast from a trumpet, and when Apollo, who presents himself as a witness and as the defender of the accused Orestes, has come forward, the trial begins. In spite of the difficulty that attends making remarks that can not be proved, so that contradiction is a cheap as well as a tempting luxury, we may be safe in conjecturing that the incidents of the trial that now follows bore a recognizable likeness to the formulas of trials as the Greeks knew them from their own experience.

But again, this was doubtless a similarity modified by the laws of the drama, very much as in Shakspeare's plays the rigid representation was affected by poetical necessities. Certainly, if we may start on the ground that is often forgotten by critics, that the master of an art knows tolerably well what he undertakes to do, the refinements and splittings of hairs that characterize the discussion represent subtleties of argument familiar to the Greeks of that time, and in Apollo's words we perhaps find more of a contemporary advocate than of a purely ideal divinity. Certainly the insinuations of the rare excellence of the judge and the benefits that will follow the decision he desires have an earthly flavor.

When Athene calls on the men of Athens to cast their ballots, she breaks into an eloquent outburst of praise of Athens, which must have delighted the audience. While the voting is going on, Apollo and the Furies vie with each other in their solicitations of favorable ballots, but with this result that the two sides have cast an equal number of votes, and that Orestes is consequently acquitted. In the glow of gratitude he swears eternal friendship to the Athenians, and if the Argives ever break this solemn compact he vows that his shade shall punish them. On the other hand, the Furies express their wrath against the upstart deities who have no regard for the old gods, and they make ready to utter terrible and fateful imprecations against the land.

Athene, however, intervenes; she tells them

"Orestes slew; and his slaying is atoned,"

and promises them a sanctuary where they shall be honored, and after some persuasion melts their wrath, and the play ends with the final reconciliation. Athene leads the procession down into the cave of the Furies, while an escort of women and children chant aloud a song of joyous welcome. The Furies are changed into the Eumenides, or gentle ones. The whole terrible history of crime and bloodshed is thus brought to a reconciliation that establishes new and bountiful deities in Attica. The allusions to an alliance with Argos probably referred to a contemporary movement in the political chequer-board, just as the final part of the play won the sympathies of the Athenians by its presentation of familiar scenes and ceremonies. Yet the last play incontestably makes a less vivid impression than its predecessors on the modern reader; the local coloring which endeared to the Greeks the conclusion of the trilogy has for us mainly an archæological interest.

It remains true, however, that in this termination of the trilogy, as throughout the work of Æschylus, we see how far the Greek tragedy was from being a mere literary presentation of familiar stories; it was



rather, as a German writer has pointed out, an effort to express the philosophy of history. The inspiration came from the sudden importance of Attica after the Persian wars, when the strongest power in the world had been overthrown by a petty state. Obviously some explanation for so marvellous an occurrence had to be found, and it was sought in the examination of man's relation to divinity. All historical research led to the same ground; for the profane and sacred history



A FURY.

of Hellas were blended in the mythological past, and in examining the past, students were soon brought face to face with the direct action of the gods on the affairs of men. Of the wealth of instances we have seen abundant proofs in the works of the lyric poets; in Pindar especially do we find continual reference to the myths that had gathered around every place that might be mentioned. Just as every spot in Italy recalls to the student incidents of modern history in that of the middle ages, and is full of memories of ancient times until these are lost in the gray mists of antiquity, so could the contemporary of Æschylus recall a long list of mythological reminiscences, the abundance and variety of which, we are justified in supposing, indicated a similar long period of growth. Fortunately for the Greeks, they en-



joyed sufficient intellectual freedom to be able to study the myths without slavish superstition. Their religion was, to a very great extent, a survival of the imaginations of a forgotten past, but into these they breathed new life by recognizing a grand movement of which the different stories were separate manifestations. In the eyes of Æschylus, who herein did but express the thoughts of the best men of his time, while happiness and unhappiness were the direct result of human actions, there yet existed the power of the gods that made itself manifest in inexplicable forms. The contest between individual freedom and the rigid laws of the universe is his constant subject, and both are drawn with largeness of treatment that is an important element in the total impression of grandeur that the work of Æschylus leaves. The old conflicts are resolved by the new forces to which every thing is subordinated. The Furies, for instance, are turned into gentle beings; the command of Zeus everywhere compels obedience, and Zeus expresses right and wisdom. In this way the apparently baffling confusion of life is reconciled with the divine rule. The contending forces are tremendous, but the final harmony is complete.

This treatment, it will be noticed, is distinguished by other qualities than subtlety; it was the ready solution that was natural to a period when unsuspected success had begotten a ready optimism. The broad lines in which the thought of Æschylus moved show the newness of the ethical judgments that fill his plays, just as the frequency of description in the place of action in the early tragedies indicates the authority of the earlier epics, and the certainty of completer dramatic machinery in the future development of the drama. As time went on, the stage became modified by inevitable laws, and the grandeur of Æschylus was succeeded by the more delicate psychological analysis of Sophocles, in whose hands a more perfect art brought the drama to a wonderful completion. It must be remembered, however, that this difference between Æschylus and Sophocles was not so much a personal one as it was the necessary result of their relative positions in the history of the Greek drama. In all literature there is behind the artist the world, and the way in which any genius shall express itself is rigidly determined by circumstances. It is by no mere coincidence that we uniformly find certain conditions invariably repeating themselves in art and letters. The man who draws in bold lines is followed by others who fill in the outlines, as Dryden was succeeded by Pope, as Shakspeare by men who subdivided the passions in their plays, and lost hold of the grander ethical purpose that characterized the master of the English stage. These later poets were controlled by the same necessities as are those men who develop the principles of the great inventions in a thousand practical minutiae, or those who,

following the conquerors of a new country, have to devote themselves to the less glorious task of introducing all the works of civilization. It is one thing to take possession of a vast country with firing of guns, hoisting of flags, and general holiday, and another to fight with savages, hew down trees, make roads, drain swamps, in the task of making the wild region habitable.

In Æschylus we find the comparative simplicity that marks a discoverer; to the epic traditions which had faded to the condition of a memorial of past glory he lent a new life, and to the lyric song which for centuries had wound around all sorts of pleasing and pathetic emotions he had opened a new life, just as Petrarch used the wonderful contrivances of mediæval song to convey the first messages of modern times. Every such period of elevation is inspiratory and hopeful. The awakening from the monotonous circular movement of the Greek lyrics, the glow of the early Renaissance, the enthusiasm of the Romantic outbreak, all shared the same sublime confidence in the final victory of the new principles by which they were animated. Hence, Æschylus needed only to state his conditions to show the ultimate solution that necessarily followed. In the *Seven against Thebes*, for example, the absence of dramatic development makes clear his confidence in the certainty and distinctness of the higher law which he saw ruling the universe. To every man and to every nation success will always seem the one normal thing; no one is appalled or startled by accomplishing what he undertakes to do; and to the generation to which Æschylus belonged, the victory over the Persians was natural and just. Even if it had to be explained as the result of the interference of the gods, men find no difficulties in adjudging themselves worthy of divine affection and aid. It is a mere matter of self-confidence, and success is sure to produce this quality.

There was a marked change in the period that followed, when the ideal impulse was succeeded by the necessity of practical action. The divine aid was no longer visible in a great and unexpected, almost miraculous, manner; but with the growth of Athens in political power, the heavenly powers had withdrawn from direct interference in human events, and men had been left to their own devices. At once the complication of life became manifest. The new cultivation declared itself in numberless new forms, in art as well as in literature, while each of these branches of intellectual interest helped the others, and the sculpture of the great Greek artists by its purity and beauty refined the literary perceptions of the people. Yet, it must be remembered, both art and letters were then, as they always are, not two distinct entities, but only different manifestations of the same feeling. Both expressed the same artistic ideal of beauty and dignity, grace and sub-



limity. The new possibilities that had opened before the human intelligence had altered the position of men in the eyes of artists and poets, and doubtless many things concerning the divine control of the world which Æschylus had stated with difficulty had found a secure place among the accepted truths of the next generation, yet these had been modified by the novel importance which the individual had acquired in the eager competition of political life. For in Æschylus nothing is more striking than the absence or, when it exists at all, the frequent crudity of the character-drawing. Individuals at times seem scarcely to exist for him. When they are most nearly drawn, as in the *Agamemnon*, they possibly depend for their vividness on the intimacy of the audience with the old myths that were comparatively disconnected with the religious beliefs, and were more venerable as contributions to poetry than as elements of faith. It may perhaps be conjectured—with timidity, as befits one who is warned by the fate that surely awaits the person who ventures to make any suggestion about the classics—that the Homeric legends retained some of the Ionic quality, and the poetry of that race was but loosely connected with religion. Indeed, when we first find the Ionians we notice that they have outgrown, or at least do not share, the communal life which is prominent among the Dorians. Their authors do not form a class; we find no groups in their individualized society where they are personified in a king or leader, and this condition of things is naturally reflected in their mythical concepts. If there is any thing in this suggestion, it may explain the formality that is more prominent in the *Agamemnon* than anywhere else in the plays of Æschylus, where we generally find abstract principles represented rather than living people. The mere prominence of the chorus in his plays illustrates this; in the *Suppliants*, for example, the play depends on the action and nature of the chorus, the daughters of Danaus. The chorus of twelve Persians are the main persons in the *Persians*. In the *Eumenides* again we notice a similar thing, and in the *Prometheus* the allegorical figures of Strength, or Violence, and Force show how possible it was for impersonal figures to appear in place of actual beings. With Sophocles it was different; in his hands the chorus shrank away before the development of the individual, and finally Euripides left it a mere spectator of the action with but a shadow of its early importance. In Aristophanes, again, we shall observe the two-fold tendency, and a divided allegiance to individuality on the one hand, and to the old-fashioned allegorical figures, such as Demos and Eirene, or Peace, on the other. The comedian's conservatism, and the inherited approval of stock figures, made the last form acceptable, for nothing has a sturdier life than a jest or a conventional figure of fun. Punch has outlived many dynasties and religions.



The changes that altered conditions produced in Sophocles combined to bring forth in his plays a quality that secured admiration for them at different periods of the world's history, when the sterner majesty of Æschylus only aroused repulsion. In the last century the earlier poet was despised, but Sophocles was greatly admired for his workmanship and the prominence that he gave to the human element. The religious tendency of the tragedies of Æschylus failed to appeal to a time of narrow intellectual interest, but the comparative worldliness of Sophocles attracted sympathetic attention. This distinction will be clearer when we examine the plays of the later dramatist, especially if we remember that the term *worldliness* is only true in comparing him with Æschylus, and that it means no more than that the conflict between human beings and the contest of their personal hopes, wishes, and fears, takes the place of the simpler struggle between characters who stand as representatives of divine principles of fate. This principle of fatality underlies the work of Sophocles, for it is part of the myths, from which he too drew his subjects; but he developed his characters into more complicated human beings, after the process that invariably rules literature, as every thing else, that progress is, in the language of philosophers, from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. A similar change, it is interesting to notice, is going on at the present time, in the change of the novel from the romantic delineation of heroes to the more careful drawing of complexer beings, who do not depend for importance on the mysterious grandeur of their qualities, but on the combination of human traits that they represent. The difference between Sophocles and Æschylus corresponds in many respects to the difference now manifesting itself between realism and romanticism, and the change from Sophocles to Euripides will only strengthen the resemblance.



ORESTES.

### CHAPTER III.—SOPHOCLES.

- I. The Life of Sophocles; His Relation to the Persian Wars—The Position he Held—His Relation to the Time of Pericles; the Main Qualities of that Brilliant Period—His Work Compared with That of Æschylus. II. The *Electra*, Compared with the Treatment of the Oresteian Myth by Æschylus—The Play Described—Importance of Oratory among the Greeks Illustrated by the Plays—Fullness of the Art of Sophocles. III. The *Antigone*; Its Adaptability to Modern Tastes—The Modification in the Treatment of the Chorus. IV. The King *Œdipus*—Its Vividness and Impressiveness. V. The *Œdipus at Colonus*—Its Praise of Athens. VI. The *Ajax*—Its Treatment of a Bit of Homeric Story—The Interference of a Deity—The Growth of Individuality. VII. The *Philoctetes*; Again Homeric Characters—The Individual Traits Strongly Brought out. VIII. The *Maidens of Trachis*—General View of the Art of Sophocles, with its Rounded Perfection.

#### I.

THE life of Sophocles contains but few events of interest, although such details as have been handed down to us are of value, as showing how all men of ability at the time he lived were likely to be drawn into the service of the state. Sophocles, the son of Sophillus, was born about the fourth year of the seventieth Olympiad, 496 B.C. at Colonus, a suburb of Athens. He belonged to a family in easy circumstances, and hence received careful instruction in music and gymnastic exercises, the two essentials of the Greek education. At the age of sixteen he was chosen for his beauty to lead the chorus of youths who danced and sang in the pæan that was performed over the trophies of Salamis. He made his first appearance as a tragedian in the year 468. On this occasion he entered into rivalry with Æschylus, who was thirty years his senior, and the decision with regard to the first prize found the audience closely divided. The archon threw the matter for adjudication into the hands of Cimon and the generals who had just returned with him from transferring the bones of Theseus from the island of Scyros to Athens. These novel judges settled the question by awarding the first prize to Sophocles, who remained the unrivalled master of the stage for many years. The departure of Æschylus for Sicily freed him from his most serious competitor. During the supremacy of Sophocles the changes in the technical construction of the drama were very slight, scarcely more, indeed, than the natural development of what was indicated by his predecessors. To



SOPHOCLES.  
*(In the Lateran Museum.)*



the two actors that Æschylus employed he added a third, thus establishing a number that was never enlarged. In his hands, furthermore, the importance of the chorus underwent a continuance of the change that already began in the work of Æschylus, and from an important representative of dramatic action it became a lyrical accompaniment. A weakness of the voice prevented Sophocles from appearing himself in a prominent part upon the stage, as was the custom among dramatic authors. Of his popularity we may judge from the fact that he obtained the first prize thirty times, while Æschylus won it but thirteen; moreover, if Sophocles failed of this highest reward, he was adjudged the second.

The prominence that he thus acquired caused him to be chosen to various positions which required far different qualities. He was one of ten generals serving with Pericles and Thucydides in the war against Samos. We do not hear that he distinguished himself in this office. On his return he was appointed priest to Alon, one of the ancient heroes, and doubtless he found this a more congenial position. We know, too, that he was interested in his civic duties, and that in his old age he was a member of a commission to investigate the public affairs, and that he gave his consent to the establishment of the oligarchy which wrought such confusion in Athens.

With regard to his private life the accounts are conflicting. A natural son of his was the father of a younger Sophocles, who acquired some reputation as a writer of tragedies. Iophon, the great poet's son, became, we are told, jealous of his father's affection for his namesake, and was led to seek aid from the courts in placing his father under guardianship for dotage and incompetence. Sophocles in self-defense read to the judges parts of his *Œdipus at Colonus*, which he had just composed, and the suit was at once decided in his favor. Iophon, it may be said by the way, was a not unsuccessful tragic writer. While these incidents rest on somewhat uncertain traditions, it is known that Sophocles lived to a great age in the enjoyment of the respect and admiration of his fellow-citizens, and that he died at about the age of ninety, in the year 406. His life covered the brief period of Athenian glory, and, dying when he did, he just escaped seeing the defeat of the naval forces of his native city by Lysander at *Ægospotamos*, the event which sealed the fate of Athens and established the supremacy of Sparta.

Obviously Sophocles is the great poet of the age of Pericles, as is Shakspeare of the Elizabethan age, Racine of that of Louis XIV.; this existence of the perfected national art with that of national importance is a coincidence that may be safely compared with the familiar instance of large towns being found on large rivers. It was not in the



drama alone that great success was attained ; prose writing had acquired an ease and grace that was reflected in some of the forms of verse, and in the fine arts the spirit that animated both found a form of expression that has never been surpassed. The political condition of Athens was also especially favorable to the production of the superiority that at this time distinguished its work, wherein it set a model which has exercised a vast influence on modern literature. The whole Athenian civilization rested, to be sure, on a democratic basis, yet this democracy was, so to speak, one formed on aristocratic principles, and was as different from a universal democracy, such as at present terrifies half the world, as was the rigid "town-autonomy" of Greece from the pliant principle of federal union that has lent itself to the formation of the United States. It is true that the Athenian populace, the *demos*, exercised complete control of the state without the intervention of the principle of representation, and that the world has never known so direct management of public affairs by private citizens. War and peace lay in the hands of the *demos* ; it appointed generals and defined public policy, besides discharging many administrative functions, yet—and this is a most important condition—the men who exercised this power were a chosen band who enjoyed a practical immunity from overwhelming work by the possession of a host of slaves. In Corinth and Ægina these must have been ten times as many as the free citizens ; in Athens it is estimated that there were at least four times as many. Hence, the free citizens of most of the countries of Greece formed a large aristocracy, bearing many likenesses to the condition of the Southern States before the war, and presenting a great contrast to the North, where citizenship was possessed by the unfranchised workingmen. The Greek slaves were treated with great kindness ; the subordination was not violent subjection ; they were ignorant, and were employed in congenial pursuits. On them the whole Greek populace rested.

Consequently art and literature grew up among a chosen multitude, whom immunity from sordid cares did not lead to idleness and corruption. From these perils of slave-ownership they were preserved by their natural energy, and by the constant call of public duty. Indifference to civic functions was held to be criminal, and the apathy which is the curse of modern civilization was practically unknown. The leisure that was secured by the employment of slaves gave the people an opportunity for higher culture. Gymnastic exercises were enforced by law upon all the free populace, and this was robbed of the appearance of odious compulsion by the fact that not only was the right of citizenship dependent on the performance of physical exercise, but that skill in these was encouraged by the importance given to the great public





PEACE WITH PLENTY ON HER ARM.



games. While before the Persian war Athens had thus trained the forces that were to repel the invader, after the war the prominence of that city brought to it from all quarters the men who led the young into countless paths of intellectual and artistic entertainment and instruction. What private luxury had begun to take root before the war diminished in the face of the new interests and enthusiasms, when tragedy, comedy, philosophy, history, art, and science met for that brief glow that has immortalized the name of Athens, and left a yet unattained model for all posterity. What had previously been possessed by separate cities and different islands was now concentrated within the walls of a single town, and the union of forces was and remains unequalled. It was a combination that was far-reaching and inspiring, not a mere co-existence of separate men of genius; these were different instruments for the expression of one inspiring feeling, of a common enthusiasm, in the support of which they harmonized as fellow-workers and lived together as friends. In the brief interval of peace for Athens under Pericles, before the long calamity of the Peloponnesian war, this gifted people reached its highest development, and it is in the work of Sophocles that it left its completest literary expression.

The inevitable comparison between his work and that of Æschylus makes clear the difference between the man who works with unfamiliar tools in rapidly changing conditions, and his successor who finds the paths cut and laid out so that it falls to him to devote himself to perfecting the task in hand. Sophocles found the drama established, and he developed its capacities. As has been indicated, what had been impressive by its sublimity he modified by lending to it human interest; what depended for its interest on great emotional development was brought down to a statement of the complexity and wonder of life. The difference was more than the result of the personal characteristics of the two men. If the position of the three great tragedians had been altered, so that Euripides had been the oldest, and Æschylus had been the youngest, it is not to be supposed that the development of the drama would have been exactly opposite to the form that we are now studying. It was rather the state of the dramatic art and of society that created and presented the conditions under which these men worked, and as the growing individualism of the time developed it left its mark on the work of these great tragedians. How it grew is to be observed in the history and literature of the period, and nowhere is it more vivid than in the drama which was the immediate reflection of the swift development of the period. The study of the plays of Sophocles will show us the corporate elements, as we may call them, of the older time, which we see in the work of Æschylus existing alongside of the individualities that are most prominent in that of

Euripides. Sophocles occupies the mean between two extremes, as further analysis will show.

## II.

Since the chronological order of the plays of Sophocles is uncertain, we may be justified in beginning with the *Electra*, which has this advantage that it treats the myths celebrated by *Æschylus* in his immortal tragedy. This will serve to show us how the characters received an individual stamp, and how details take the place of the earlier broad treatment. The conflict between them, it will be seen, bears rather the appearance of personal antagonism than of the collision of diverse fates. We shall notice other changes, too, such as the closer interweaving of the scenes, and, in general, greater care in the technical construction of stage effect, all of which, as well as the others that strike the reader's attention, are in the nature of a fuller evolution of the capacities of the Greek drama.

The first technical difference between Sophocles and his master is this: that the later writer abandoned the form of the trilogy and wrote single plays, without regard to the principle of construction that arranged three tragedies in orderly and dependent sequence. Possibly the growing competition enforced this change. At any rate we have the *Electra* standing alone, unconnected with any other play. The other most prominent distinction between this play and that of *Æschylus* is that it is *Electra* and not *Orestes* who is the prominent character. Her brother, though he wreaks vengeance with his own hand, is a comparatively unimportant character. The very choice of *Electra* for heroine marks an important difference; she is not compelled by resistless fate to be an instrument in the terrible series of alternate vengeance that makes up the bloody story, and, by selecting her, Sophocles at once lent the myth a human aspect. He was able to represent her as the despised daughter of the detested Agamemnon, leading a wretched existence in her stepfather's house, a condition which was only made vivid to the spectators by their own experience or observation, and was not a part of the shadowy mythical inheritance. *Æschylus* was able to rest on the general knowledge of the legend; Sophocles modified this by letting his heroine appear in almost a domestic character. How he developed this personage the play will show. It is interesting, by the way, to notice with what freedom the myths could be treated. We have already seen their abundance in examining the poems of Pindar, and the poet could find somewhere in this rich collection authority for variations. Moreover, he was not held down to over-precision; he enjoyed a certain amount of liberty, as did Shakspeare in his historical plays, and Sir Walter Scott

and Alexandre Dumas in their romances. The way in which the last-named made over history to suit his purpose, as in the conflicting accounts of the death of Henry II., in his "*Deux Dianas*" and his "*Le Page du Duc de Savoie*," indicate the sort of freedom that the Greek writers enjoyed. Precision of detail was regarded less than vividness of impression.

The play opens with the entrance of Orestes with Pylades and his attendant, and the first speech of the play, that of the aged servant, at once sets before the spectator, or, in these days, the reader, the motive of the tragedy.

"Now, son of Agamemnon, who of old  
 Led our great hosts at Troy, 'tis thine to see  
 What long thou hast desired. For lo! there lies  
 The ancient Argos, which, with yearning wish,  
 Thou oft didst turn to; here the sacred grove  
 Of her who wandered, spurred by ceaseless sting,  
 Daughter of Inachos: and this, Orestes,  
 Is the wide agora, Lykeian named  
 In honour of the god who slew the wolves;  
 Here on the left, the shrine of Hera famed;  
 And where we stand, Mykenæ, rich in gold,  
 Thou look'st upon, in slaughter also rich,  
 The house of Pelops' line. Here, long ago,  
 After thy father's murder I received thee,  
 At thy dear sister's hands, to kindred true;  
 And took thee, saved thee, reared thee in my home,  
 To this thy manhood, destined to avenge  
 Thy father's death. Now, therefore, O my son,  
 Orestes, and thou, Pylades, most dear  
 Of all true friends, we needs must quickly plan  
 What best to do. For lo! the sun's bright rays  
 Wake up the birds to tune their matin songs,  
 And star-decked night's dark shadows flee away;  
 Ye, then, before ye enter, taking rest,  
 The roof of living man, hold conference;  
 For as things are, we may not linger on:  
 The time is come for action."

This compact exposition of the conditions under which the play opens is followed by a speech of Orestes in which he announces the plan he has formed: the servant, who from lapse of time is no longer to be recognized, is to introduce himself to Ægisthus and Clytemnestra as a stranger, a Phokæan, recommended to them by Phanoteus, their friend. He is to tell the guilty pair that Orestes was killed by an accident at the Pythian games—a pardonable anachronism, for these games were established 586 B.C., and the statement is to be confirmed by Orestes himself, who shall appear with Pylades, bearing an urn that is to be presented as the receptacle of the young man's ashes. Then, suspicion being allayed, Orestes will take swift vengeance. So far the prologue confines itself to the familiar legendary plot, except



in the introduction of the urn, and presents as a distinctive trait perhaps nothing more than a compressed though vivid style. Yet, at the very end of his speech, when Orestes is saying :

“ And now, old friend, 'tis thine to watch thy task :  
We twain go forth. The true, right time is come,  
That mightiest master of all works of men,”

at that moment Electra is heard within, saying :

“ Woe, woe is me ! O misery ! ”

This cry sounds the key-note of the tragedy, which practically lies in the torn soul of Electra. The attendant says that he thought he



DECORATING A TOMB.

heard the sound of some one wailing within, and Orestes suggests that it may be Electra, and asks if they shall remain and listen, but this plan is condemned by the attendant and they all depart. No sooner are they gone than Electra appears wailing her misery in an ode that runs as follows :

“ O holy light, and air that overcanopieth the whole earth, thou hast heard many songs of my wailings, many blows straight-handed on my bleeding breast, when dark night has sunk. The bed—I hate it—in this doleful house knows well how I keep revel in the long night, and weep for my unhappy father, whom in a strange land murdering Ares did not welcome, but my mother and her bedfellow, Ægisthus, as woodcutters cleave an oak’s head

with a murdering axe. And for this no pity revokes from another, but from me—that you died, my father, so shamefully, pitifully ! I will not cease my wailing, and miserable weeping, so long as I shall see the bright shiverings of the stars and this daylight. But like a nightingale whose children are dead, with wailing before these my father's doors I will cry aloud for all to hear. O home of Hades and Persephone, O Hermes of the under world, and holy Ara, and the Erinnyes, august children of the gods, who see those that die unjustly, and those that steal their wives from other men, come, help avenge my father's murder, and send me my brother ; since alone I can no longer set in the scale a weight to match my woe."

With this the prologue ends, and is followed by the *kommos*, or the dirge sung by the chorus and an actor. The time that Orestes is devoting to funeral sacrifices is employed by Electra in bewailing her misery and in rejecting the well-meant consolations of the chorus. The lyrical expression of her grief is followed by a long exposition of her sufferings in the usual language of tragedy. The chorus ask after her brother ; she says :

He speaks of coming ; yet he nothing does.

CHO. One who works great things oft is slow in them.

To which Electra answers with a touch of personal feeling that continually flashes into the tragedy :

"I was not slow when I did save his life,"

a phrase that at once shows more vividly than even her eloquent expounding of her woes that it is an impatient sister, not a remote creature of a legend, who is speaking. This same character is further brought out in the conversation that follows between Electra and her younger sister Chrysothemis, an absolutely commonplace person, who comes forward to remonstrate with Electra for excessive lamentation :

"What plaint is this thou utterest, sister dear,  
Here at the outlet of the palace gates ?  
And wilt not learn the lessons time should teach  
To yield no poor compliance to a wrath  
That is but vain ? This much myself I know :  
I grieve at what befalls us. Had I strength,  
I would show plainly what I think of them ;  
But now it seems most wise in weather foul  
To slack my sail, and make no idle show  
Of doing something when I cannot harm," etc., etc.

We are not in the accustomed region of the Æschylean tragedy, but where the tragic condition is rendered human by this flavor of misunderstanding. We see a proud, long-suffering girl compelled to listen to the jarring worldly wisdom of a weak, time-serving sister, and the familiar complexities of domestic life at once set forth the heroine's distress in the most universally intelligible manner. The chafing of

family life appealed to every listener. The change was a subtle one. We think of the domesticity of the characters of Æschylus as little as we do of that of statues, yet that author must have often chosen women for the leading rôles; thus among the titles of his last tragedies are Iphigeneia, Niobe, Penelope, Semele, Europe, etc., so that Sophocles was not the first to give women prominence in tragedy; what he did was to draw them with some of the traits of human life. Not with all, for the obvious peril of the change was triviality, and this he avoided by the same art that Shakspeare employed in delineating Desdemona, Juliet, and Lady Macbeth.

If Chrysothemis is represented rather as a light-weight, she has at least the advantage of possessing some judgment, and Electra, intense as is her feeling, escapes shrewishness. The younger sister indeed gives discreet advice; she gives Electra warning of Clytemnestra's determination to imprison her; naturally Electra is not intimidated by this news. Chrysothemis asks her:

"Hast thou no care for this thy present life?"

Electra answers:

A goodly life for men to wonder at!

CHRYS. So might it be if thou would'st wisdom learn.

ELEC. Teach me no baseness to the friends I love.

CHRYS. I teach not that, yet kings must be obeyed.

ELEC. Fawn as thou wilt; thy fashion is not mine.

One perceives the wisdom of weakness and the folly of enthusiasm in their unending and unequal strife. The anger of Electra is only heightened when she hears that Chrysothemis had been sent out to place funeral offerings on her father's tomb by Clytemnestra, who was terrified by an alarming dream. She bids her sister to set the offerings aside, and instead to lay on the tomb locks from the head of both herself and Chrysothemis, and to pray that Orestes may soon return. This Chrysothemis agrees to do, being further urged by the chorus, and after she is gone the chorus sing an ode preparatory to the following scene, which brings Clytemnestra herself face to face with Electra. Here the dramatic action halts while the exposition goes on, but this is most vivid. Clytemnestra is flown with insolence; she abuses Electra for taking advantage of the absence of Ægisthus to go outside of the palace, thereby disgracing her friends. It is never forgotten, the reader will notice, that Electra is a stepdaughter as well as an unfortunate heroine. Then Clytemnestra takes up the subject of enmity between them and boldly defends the murder of Agamemnon, on the ground that he had sacrificed Iphigeneia.



“ Was he not  
 In this a reckless father found and base ?  
 I answer, yes, though thou refuse assent ;  
 And she that died would say it, could she speak.  
 I then feel no remorse for what is done.”

She thus attains the height of exultation in her crime, and, in her arrogant security, gives Electra leave to plead her cause. She is not backward :

“ Thou say'st thy hand  
 Did'st slay my father ! Is there aught of shame  
 Than this more shameful, whether thou can'st urge,  
 Or not, the plea of justice ? But I say  
 Thou did'st not justly slay him, but wast led  
 By vile suggestion of the coward base  
 Who now lives with thee.”

And further on :

“ For should we evermore take blood for blood,  
 Thou would'st fall first, if thou did'st get thy due.”

And, to make one more quotation :

“ But since to speak  
 A word of counsel is not granted us,  
 Though thou dost love to speak all words of ill,  
 That ‘ we revile a mother ’ ; yet I look  
 On thee as more my mistress than my mother,  
 Living a woeful life, by many ills  
 Encompassed which proceed from thee, and him,  
 The partner of thy guilt. That other one,  
 My poor Orestes, hardly 'scaped from thee,  
 Drags on a weary life. Full oft hast thou  
 Charged me with rearing him to come at last  
 A minister of vengeance ; and I own,  
 Had I but strength, be sure of this, 'twere done.”

After fierce recriminations between the mother and daughter, Electra retires to the back of the stage to let her mother place the funeral offerings and to pray that the evil that the dreams forebode may be prevented, and further that the god may grant the secret, unspoken wishes of her heart, meaning by these release from peril at the hands of Orestes. The exposition is complete ; the queen could go no further.

If this scene offends us moderns by the long arguments that compose it, we must remember how important a thing was eloquence in the life of the Athenians. One reason of its influence was the lack of material for reading, a condition that augmented the power of public speech just as the present facility for addressing others with the aid of the printing-press tends to destroy the power of eloquence. Not

only were public matters publicly debated with all the openness of a New England town-meeting, but it was also customary for private litigants to argue their own causes. We shall meet many additional proofs of the dependence of the quick-witted Athenians on discussion and conversation, which were still a part of eloquence. Perhaps the most marked instance of its predominance is to be seen in the fact that Thucydides in his history continually let the course of events be presented in the form of the speeches of prominent statesmen. That was the language which most nearly addressed his countrymen, and Sophocles in these speeches of Clytemnestra and Electra was affected by the same influence. Just as Shakspeare in the quibbles that are to be found in his speeches or conversations reflects the new-born euphemisms of his day, so did Sophocles reflect the argumentative eloquence of Athens. Every art, indeed, mirrors the conditions in which it flourishes, just as every man bears some marks of his education. In the Greek sculpture it is not more impossible to trace the influence of the material which abounded in Attica than it is to see the authority of the Byzantine mosaics in early modern painting. The calm self-possession of the faces, the broad masses, of the Greek sculpture indicate, as Curtius has said, another origin than that of the lighter, bolder figures which are worked in metal. And the conditions of the material demanded from the artist in marble a grace and seriousness, a dignity of repose, which would not have been required by another material. Somewhat like this is the influence that the Greek eloquence had upon the forms of literature and notably upon the drama. It affected the modes of thought and their expression in a way that does not at first explain itself to us, and while to the Greeks this controversy helped to give a human setting to the play, it may seem to us to retard the action. We have seen another illustration in the predominance of the choral passages in the early tragedies, which was the direct result of the absorption by the drama of the ripest form of literary expression, and in the eloquence and arguments of Sophocles we see again the direct influence of the habits of the time in which he lived. Exactly in the same way do we see the marks of the heroic romances throughout Shakspeare, in the language, in the indistinct geographical setting, in fact in all the hues of local color. For a single example take the Prince of Morocco in the Merchant of Venice; he has stepped straight out of a romance, and his origin could never have been for a moment doubtful to the playwright's contemporaries. Moreover, the protracted discussions which begin to be frequent in Sophocles, and are almost the whole stock in trade of Euripides, also represent the new spirit of doubt that was to make itself felt in philosophy. Æschylus believed without

misgiving ; but that quality disappeared gradually, and here we see the traces of its decay.

To return to the tragedy after this long digression : we find the prayer of Clytemnestra followed by the entrance of the guardian of Orestes, who, as has been planned, brings false tidings of that young hero's death at the Pythian games. This he does in a vivid description of a chariot race, and while the chorus lament Clytemnestra gasps out :

"O Zeus ! What means this . . . shall I say, good news?  
Or fearful, yet most gainful ? Still 'tis sad  
If by my sorrows I must save my life."

Certainly tragedy sweeps by here.

When the guardian asks with curious affectation of curiosity, she answers :

"Wondrous and strange the force of motherhood !  
Though wronged, a mother cannot hate her children."

This may well be counted among the few intense points of tragedy which the long life of the human race and its many miseries have been able to leave on the page of literature. The guardian goes on :

"We then, it seems, are come to thee in vain."

To which Clytemnestra makes reply :

"Nay, not in vain. How could it be in vain?  
Since thou bring'st proofs that he is dead, who, born  
Child of my heart, from breasts that gave him suck  
Then turned aside, and dwelt on foreign soil  
In banishment ; and since he left our land  
Ne'er came to see me, but with dreadful words,  
His father's death still casting upon me,  
Spake out his threats, so that nor day nor night  
I knew sweet sleep, but still the sway of time  
Led on my life, as one condemned to death.  
But now, for lo ! this day has stopped all fear  
From her and him, for she was with me still,  
The greater mischief, sucking out my life,  
My very heart's blood : now for all her threats,  
We shall live on and pass our days in peace."

We are back again in the relentless tragedy, and after the faint flickering of a mother's love Clytemnestra clenches her teeth and hardens her heart against every trace of human affection. She is ready to carry out what Lady Macbeth says :

"I have given suck, and know  
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me ;  
I would, while it was smiling in my face,  
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,  
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you  
Have done to this."



Against this extreme of wanton insolence and unnatural cruelty, the poet sets the agony of Electra, who feels that every hope is gone. Her lamentations, however, are interrupted by her sister, who comes running in with the tidings that she has just found on the tomb the offering that, it will be remembered, Orestes had placed there, and that she felt sure that they had been laid there by him. Electra, who meanwhile has heard of the death of Orestes, pays no attention to these facts, which seem of no importance, but entreats her sister's aid in murdering Ægisthus. Naturally Chrysothemis refuses to further this bold plan.

In the next scene Orestes and Pylades appear with an attendant who carries a funeral urn; Electra takes this urn in her hands, and utters the most pathetic lament. This speech and the scene of recognition between her and Orestes will be found just below. The reader will notice how much Sophocles has altered the story as it is told by Æschylus, and how much these changes add to the pathos of the play. The steady accumulation of misery exalts her desire for vengeance, and brings out more clearly her hopeless loneliness, with her mother cruel, her sister timid and indifferent, her brother, as she believes, dead.

The slaying of Clytemnestra follows quickly, and, by a wise modification, she is the first to fall, while Orestes is hot with wrath, rather than from the determination to fulfill the commands of the gods, as in the Chœphoræ. Ægisthus then enters, and on approaching to see the body of Orestes the veil is removed, and he sees Clytemnestra dead before him. The rest is done in a moment, and the play ends with Ægisthus killed.

ELEC.. [*Taking the urn in her hands.*] O sole memorial of his life whom  
most

Of all alive I loved ! Orestes mine,  
With other thoughts I sent thee forth than these  
With which I now receive thee. Now, I bear  
In these my hands what is but nothingness ;  
But sent thee forth, dear boy, in bloom of youth.  
Ah, would that I long since had ceased to live  
Before I sent thee to a distant shore,  
With these my hands, and saved thee then from death !  
So had'st thou perished on that self-same day,  
And had a share in that thy father's tomb.  
But now from home, an exile in a land  
That was not thine, without thy sister near,  
So did'st thou die, and I, alas, poor me !  
Did neither lay thee out with lustral rites  
And loving hands, nor bear thee, as was meet,  
Sad burden, from the blazing funeral pyre ;  
But thou, poor sufferer, tended by the hands  
Of strangers, comest, in this paltry urn,  
In paltry bulk. Ah ! miserable me !



ORESTES KILLS AEGISTHUS.



For all the nurture, now so profitless,  
Which I was wont with sweetest toil to give  
For thee, my brother. Never did she love,  
Thy mother, as I loved thee; nor did they  
Who dwell within there nurse thee, but 'twas I,  
And I was ever called thy sister true;  
But now all this has vanished in a day  
In this thy death; for, like a whirlwind, thou  
Hast passed, and swept off all. My father falls;  
I perish; thou thyself hast gone from sight;  
Our foes exult. Thy mother, wrongly named,  
For mother she is none, is mad with joy,  
Of whom thou oft did'st sent word secretly  
That thou would'st come, and one day show thyself  
A true avenger. But thine evil fate,  
Thine and mine also, hath bereaved me of thee,  
And now hath sent, instead of that dear form,  
This dust, this shadow, vain and profitless.  
Woe, woe is me!

O piteous, piteous corpse!  
Thou dearest, who did'st tread  
(Woe, woe is me!)

Paths full of dread and fear,  
How hast thou brought me low,  
Yea, brought me very low, thou dearest one!  
Therefore receive thou me to this thine home,  
Ashes to ashes, that with thee below  
I may from henceforth dwell. When thou wast here  
I shared with thee an equal lot, and now  
I crave in dying not to miss thy tomb;  
For those that die I see are freed of grief.  
CHOR. Thou, O Electra, take good heed, wast born  
Of mortal father, mortal, too, Orestes;  
Yield not too much to grief. To suffer thus  
Is common lot of all.

ORES. [*Trembling.*] Ah, woe is me!

What shall I say? Ah, whither find my way  
In words confused? I fail to rule my speech.

ELEC. What grief disturbs thee? Wherefore speak'st thou thus?

ORES. Is this Electra's noble form I see?

ELEC. That self-same form, and sad enough its state.

ORES. Alas, alas, for this sad lot of thine!

ELEC. Surely thou dost not wail, O friend, for me?

ORES. O form most basely, godlessly misused!

ELEC. Thy words ill-omened fall on none but me.

ORES. Alas, for this thy life of lonely woe!

ELEC. Why, in thy care for me, friend, groanest thou?

ORES. How little knew I of my fortune's ills!

ELEC. What have I said to throw such light on them?

ORES. Now that I see thee clad with many woes.

ELEC. And yet thou see'st but few of all mine ills.

ORES. What could be sadder than all this to see?

ELEC. This, that I sit at meat with murderers.

ORES. With whose? What evil dost thou mean by this?

ELEC. My father's; next, I'm forced to be their slave.

ORES. And who constrains thee to this loathed task?

ELEC. My mother she is called, no mother like.

ORES. How so? By blows, or life with hardships full?

ELEC. Both blows and hardships, and all forms of ill.

ORES. And is there none to help, not one to check?



- ELEC. No, none. Who was . . . thou bringest him as dust.  
 ORES. O sad one! Long I pitied as I gazed!  
 ELEC. Know, then, that thou alone dost pity me.  
 ORES. For I alone come suffering woes like thine.  
 ELEC. What? Can it be thou art of kin to us?  
 ORES. If these are friendly, I could tell thee more.  
 ELEC. Friendly are they; thou'lt speak to faithful ones.  
 ORES. Put by that urn, that thou may'st hear the whole.  
 ELEC. Ah, by the gods, O stranger, ask not that.  
 ORES. Do what I bid thee, and thou shalt not err.  
 ELEC. Nay, by thy beard, of that prize rob me not.  
 ORES. I may not have it so.  
 ELEC. Ah me, Orestes,  
 How wretched I, bereaved of this thy tomb!  
 ORES. Hush, hush such words; thou hast no cause for wailing.  
 ELEC. Have I no cause, who mourn a brother's death?  
 ORES. Thou hast no call to utter speech like this.  
 ELEC. Am I then deemed unworthy of the dead?  
 ORES. Of none unworthy. This is nought to thee.  
 ELEC. Yet if I hold Orestes' body here.  
 ORES. 'Tis not Orestes' save in show of speech.  
 ELEC. Where, then, is that poor exile's sepulchre?  
 ORES. Nay, of the living there's no sepulchre.  
 ELEC. What say'st thou, boy?  
 ORES. No falsehood what I say.  
 ELEC. And does he live?  
 ORES. He lives, if I have life.  
 ELEC. What? Art thou he?  
 ORES. Look thou upon this seal,  
 My father's once, and learn if I speak truth.  
 ELEC. O blessed light!  
 ORES. Most blessed, I too own.  
 ELEC. O voice! And art thou come?  
 ORES. No longer learn  
 Thy news from others.  
 ELEC. And I have thee here,  
 Here in my grasp?  
 ORES. So may'st thou always have me!  
 ELEC. O dearest friends, my fellow-citizens,  
 Look here on this Orestes, dead indeed  
 In feignèd craft, and by that feigning saved.  
 CHOR. We see it, daughter, and at what has chanced  
 A tear of gladness trickles from our eyes.  
 ELEC. O offspring, offspring of a form most dear,  
 Ye came, ye came at last,  
 Ye found us, yea, ye came,  
 Ye saw whom ye desired.  
 ORES. Yes, we are come. Yet wait and hold thy peace.  
 ELEC. What now?  
 ORES. Silence is best, lest some one hear within.  
 ELEC. Nay, nay. By Artemis,  
 The ever-virgin One,  
 I shall not deign to dread  
 Those women there within,  
 With worthless burden still  
 Cumbering the ground.  
 ORES. See to it, for in women too there lives  
 The strength of battle. Thou hast proved it well.  
 ELEC. [*sobbing*] Ah, ah! Ah me!



ORESTES AND ELECTRA.  
(Known as the Menelaus Group.)

There thou hast touched upon a woe unveiled,  
That knows no healing, no  
Nor ever may be hid.

ORES. I know it well. But, when occasion bids,  
Then should we call those deeds to memory.

ELEC. All time for me is fit,  
Yea, all, to speak of this  
With wrath as it deserves ;  
Till now I had scant liberty of speech.

ORES. There we are one. Preserve, then, what thou  
hast.

ELEC. And what, then, shall I do ?

ORES. When time serves not,  
Speak not o'ermuch.

ELEC. And who then worthily,  
Now thou art come, would choose  
Silence instead of speech ?  
For lo ! I see thee now unlooked, unhopd for.

ORES. Then thou did'st see me here,  
When the gods urged my coming.

ELEC. Thou hast said  
What mounts yet higher than thy former boon,  
If God has sent thee forth  
To this our home, I deem  
The work as heaven's own deed.

ORES. Loth am I to restrain thee in thy joy,  
And yet I fear delight o'ermasters thee.

ELEC. O thou who after many a weary year  
At last has deigned to come  
(Oh, coming of great joy !)  
Do not, thus seeing me  
Involved in many woes . . . .

ORES. What is it that thou ask'st me not to do ?

ELEC. Deprive me not, nor force me to forego  
The joy supreme of looking on thy face.

ORES. I should be wroth with others who would force  
thee.

ELEC. Dost thou consent, then ?

ORES. How act otherwise ?

ELEC. Ah, friends, I heard a voice  
Which never had I dreamt would come to me ;  
Then I kept in my dumb and passionate mood,  
Nor cried I, as I heard ;

But now I have thee ; thou hast come to me  
With face most precious, dear to look upon,  
Which e'en in sorrow I can ne'er forget.

ORES. All needless words pass over. Tell me not  
My mother's shame, nor how Ægisthos drains  
My father's wealth, much wastes, and scatters much ;  
Much speech might lose occasion's golden hour ;  
But what fits in to this our present need,  
That tell me, where, appearing or concealed,  
We best shall check our boasting enemies,  
In this our enterprise ; so when we twain  
Go to the palace, look to it, that she note not,  
Thy mother, by thy blither face, our coming,  
But mourn as for that sorrow falsely told.  
When we have prospered, then shalt thou have leave  
Freely to smile, and joy exultingly.



ELEC. Yes, brother dear ! Whatever pleaseth thee,  
 That shall be my choice also, since my joy  
 I had not of mine own, but gained from thee,  
 Nor would I cause thee e'en a moment's pain,  
 Myself to reap much profit. I should fail,  
 So doing, to work His will who favors us.  
 What meets us next, thou knowest, dost thou not ?  
 Ægisthos, as thou hearest, gone from home ;  
 Thy mother there within, of whom fear not  
 Lest she should see my face look blithe with joy ;  
 For my old hatred eats into my soul,  
 And, since I've seen thee, I shall never cease  
 To weep for very joy. How could I cease,  
 Who in this one short visit looked on thee  
 Dead, and alive again ? Strange things to-day  
 Hast thou wrought out, so strange that should there come  
 My father, in full life, I should not deem  
 'Twas a mere marvel, but believe I saw him.  
 But, since thou com'st on such an enterprise,  
 Rule thou as pleases thee. Were I alone,  
 I had not failed of two alternatives,  
 Or nobly had I saved myself, or else  
 Had nobly perished.

ORES. Silence now is best ;  
 I hear the steps of some one from within,  
 As if approaching.

From this account of the *Electra* the reader may judge of the difference between the art of Sophocles and that of Æschylus, and since Euripides also wrote a play on the same subject we shall be able later to make a comparison of the three masters of tragedy. Yet, as will be seen, a hasty generalization will have to be avoided, because the *Electra* of Euripides does that poet less credit than some of his other plays. The *Electra* of Sophocles, though not his greatest piece, contains a good share of what is best in his work, pathos, for example, eloquence, ingenious construction, and, above all, the seriousness which is so marked a characteristic of the great Greek tragedians as it is of Shakspeare. This is shown in the way that all the diverse merits are subordinated to the utterance of the profoundest truths regarding human life. In the earlier lyric poetry of Greece, literary excellence of a rare sort was to be found, but it had one of the qualities that accrue to complete art finding expression in an artificial, conventional, and above all in so compact form, namely, that it lacks life, whatever other qualities it may possess, just as a witticism generally lacks the highest wisdom. The Greeks when writing lyrics were cutting gems, and that is an occupation which possesses a certain insignificance by the side of sculpture, and their tragedies possess a fullness of life, an abundance of suggestion and implication, such as only the highest art can convey. Every detached statement is but partly true ; it is only an accumulation of them that can really throw light on life, and while the

brilliant flashes of the lyrics delight us, tease us with vivid, brief fragments of truth, it is from the great, glowing mass of the tragedy, with its wholeness of vision, that we get the feeling of great aid, or of the vast solemnity of human existence.

### III.

In the *Antigone* we find, as it were, a distinct resemblance to the *Electra* that may justify its examination in this place. It is known that it was the thirty-second play in the order of composition, and was thus written when the art of Sophocles had reached its highest perfection. The qualities of the play would alone prove this. In antiquity it received especial admiration, and although the plot depends on conditions that do not forcibly appeal to us this fact does not lessen the enthusiasm of modern readers; the skill, the grace, the pathos of the poet yet and ever exercise their charm. The reader will remember that at the end of the *Seven against Thebes* the body of Polyneices, slain in his attack on the city, was ordered to be left unburied, and that *Antigone* avowed her determination to inter it, in spite of this direct command. This is the whole subject of the *Antigone*, though whether it was from *Æschylus*, or from some one else who added to the play, is a debated question. Whoever wrote it, this is the plot of the play of Sophocles.

As in the *Electra*, we have two sisters holding different views; *Antigone* urges *Ismene* to join her in the plan she has formed of burying their brother, but is met by timidity and reluctance. In the first scene not only the action of the play, but the character of *Antigone* and the opposition that she is to meet with, are clearly indicated with the swiftness and vividness that mark a master's hand. *Antigone* has all the determination, but not violence, that is required for the deliberate violation of a king's command, and it is the firmness and unswerving courage of her character that is enforced throughout. Naturally enough these traits cannot be brought out without the sacrifice of the opposite qualities; hence there adheres to *Antigone* a flavor of harshness which can scarcely fail to strike modern readers, whose womanly ideal for centuries has been a docile and yielding being without a will or, one may say, a mind of her own. The prudent and timid *Ismene* is much more nearly a modern heroine than is her sister, who, single handed, fights in defense of piety against despotic law.

After *Creon* has pronounced his edict that no one shall pay any honors to the corpse of *Polyneices*, a guard enters, and with all the clumsiness that in our novels and plays is put in the mouth of an Irish or Scotch peasant informs the king that some one has paid honors to

the dead soldier; soon the guilty Antigone is brought in before Creon, who asks if it was she who dared to disobey his laws.

"Yes," she answers, "for it was not Zeus that gave them forth,  
Nor Justice, dwelling with the gods below,  
Who traced these laws for all the sons of men;  
Nor did I deem thy edicts strong enough,  
That thou, a mortal man, should'st over-pass  
The unwritten laws of God that know not change.  
They are not of to-day nor yesterday,  
But live forever, nor can man assign  
When first they sprang to being. Not through fear  
Of any man's resolve was I prepared  
Before the gods to bear the penalty  
Of sinning against these. That I should die  
I know, (how should I not?) though thy decree  
Had never spoken. And, before my time  
If I shall die, I reckon this a gain;  
For whoso lives, as I, in many woes,  
How can it be but he shall gain by death?  
And so for me to bear this doom of thine  
Has nothing painful. But, if I had left  
My mother's son unburied on his death,  
In that I should have suffered; but in this  
I suffer not. And should I seem to thee  
To do a foolish deed, 'tis simply this,—  
I bear the charge of folly from a fool."

Here we have a complete statement of Antigone's ground of action, and in the last fling we have a vigorous disproof of the error that has become a part of the conception of Greek tragedy as a cold and artificial thing.

Just before, the half-amusing thick-wittedness of the soldier has shown that not in modern times alone have writers been able to enrich their work with little touches of nature, such as one is unaccustomed to expect in Greek tragedies; for these have been spoken of as remote and inaccessible storehouses of difficult figures of speech, icy metaphors, and fantastic feeling. Yet the more they are examined the richer are they found in human sympathies. It is not easy for us to form a satisfactory conception of the extent to which this very play would appeal to all Greeks with their vivid feeling of the necessity of conferring funeral rites upon their dead; but through this crust of obsolete ceremonial there breathes the human soul in trouble, and that is enough. In the speech just given of Antigone it is not lack of sympathy that we feel; we see the earnest sense of duty that animates the heroine, her wrath, and the engaging candor of her tongue. She is preparing her own fate, just as truly as, on the other hand, we may see in Creon the personification of rigid laws obstinately deaf to all the surrounding influences that gradually place themselves in opposition to his cruelty.



Ismene is accused by him of aiding Antigone in her opposition to his commands, and wishes to share her sister's punishment, but her generosity only serves as a foil to Antigone's cruel isolation. Ismene further entreats Creon to pardon Antigone, who is betrothed to his son Hæmon, and the chorus add their prayers, but the tyrant is obstinate. Hæmon himself urges his father to clemency, pointing out the king's advantage rather than his own personal wishes, but in vain. Creon orders Antigone to be immured in a cave to die alone. Every interference is fruitless, and Antigone is borne to her living tomb, mourning her untimely fate, but not shaken in her consciousness of right-doing. The chorus sympathize with her, and it is interesting to notice how certainly, if slowly, sympathy is aroused in behalf of the doomed heroine. Their pity, too, is made to appear more valuable by her rigidity and harshness. Had she shown an appealing gentleness or grace, she would have never lacked defenders, but without them she finally won the sincerest pity.



TEIRESIAS.

After Creon's orders have been carried out, the old seer Teiresias appears and foretells all manner of woe to Creon, who finally consents to yield. But it is too late. The messenger enters with tidings of Hæmon's death by his own hands, after a vain effort to kill his father, by the side of Antigone, who had hanged herself. Eurydice, Creon's wife, hears this news with horror and disappears; soon another messenger comes in to announce that she too has slain herself, and Creon's cup of unhappiness is full, his spirit is broken. The tragic conflict has at least not been complicated by sympathy with him. Indeed, there is a repellant quality in both Creon and Antigone which gives them

a similitude rather to abstract personifications than to living beings, and when we remember how frequently this play was translated at the time of the Renaissance we may perhaps conjecture that some of the coldness of the early imitations of the classical plays was inspired by the willful copying of this fault, which seemed to have all the authority

of Greece behind it. It is not at first clear how much fanaticism like that which possessed Antigone fills the heart to the exclusion of other qualities, and the time had not yet come when poets had learned that bitterness and determination might be found in combination with softness and gentleness, and Antigone is a legendary heroine, not a modern Nihilist.

Yet while the play moves in a remote region, there is scarcely any other work of Sophocles in which the lyrical part sounds a higher note, where the especial dramatic interest so thoroughly combines with the universal, lasting truth. Here we have Sophocles at his best, as in the first stasimon. The reader will notice at once the fact that the poet has chosen for his subject the realities of life, and is far removed from the consideration of the remote questions that agitated the soul of Æschylus. It is a modern who is speaking.

## STROPH. I.

CHOR. Many the forms of life,  
Wondrous and strange to see,  
But nought than man appears  
More wondrous and more strange.  
He, with the wintry gales,  
O'er the the white foaming sea,  
'Mid wild waves surging round,  
Wendeth his way across :  
Earth, of all Gods, from ancient days the first,  
Unworn and undecayed,  
He, with his ploughs that travel o'er and o'er,  
Furrowing with horse and mule,  
Wears ever year by year.

## ANTISTROPH. I.

The thoughtless tribe of birds,  
The beasts that roam the fields,  
The brood in sea-depths born,  
He takes them all in nets  
Knotted in snaring mesh,  
Man, wonderful in skill.  
And by his subtle arts  
He holds in sway the beasts  
That roam the fields, or tread the mountain's height,  
And brings the binding yoke  
Upon the neck of horse with shaggy mane,  
Or bull on mountain crest,  
Untamable in strength.

## STROPH. II.

And speech, and thought as swift as wind,  
And tempered mood for higher life of states,  
These he has learnt, and how to flee  
Or the clear cold of frost unkind,  
Or darts of storm and shower,

Man all-providing. Unprovided, he  
 Meeteth no chance the coming days may bring;  
 Only from Hades, still  
 He fails to find escape,  
 Though skill of art may teach him how to flee  
 From depths of fell disease incurable.

## ANTISTROPH. II.

So, gifted with a wondrous might,  
 Above all fancy's dreams, with skill to plan,  
 Now unto evil, now to good,  
 He turns. While holding fast the laws,  
 His country's sacred rights,  
 That rest upon the oath of Gods on high,  
 High in the State: an outlaw from the State,  
 When loving, in his pride,  
 The thing that is not good;  
 Ne'er may he share my hearth, nor yet my thoughts,  
 Who worketh deeds of evil like to this.

Even more impressive is the second stasimon, given below, although in both of these extracts it is impossible not to observe how much the author seems to be sitting outside of his work, and to be commenting upon it, in a most impressive and beautiful way, to be sure, but yet with a different conception of the quality of the choral performance from that which we saw in *Æschylus*. In other words, the drama was undergoing its normal development, in which action becomes more prominent, and the lyric part is still a graceful accompaniment, but distinctly an accompaniment; its further modification will be seen in the work of Euripides. It is not an actor in the play who indulges in these reflections on human life, but the author, who takes advantage of the pause in the action to accentuate the mood into which he wishes to throw his hearers. The whole conception of the drama is in process of change—he would be a bold man who would say whether for the better or the worse, for in the whole modification something is lost for everything that is gained; it remains for us to notice the course of events, and, by understanding it, to be able to appreciate what was done. Such conduct has at least one swift and sure reward: comprehension of different conditions can not fail to bring an enlargement of the capacity of enjoyment. A botanist, for example, will love all flowers.

## STROPH. I.

CHOR. Blessed are those whose life no woe doth taste!  
 For unto those whose house  
 The Gods have shaken, nothing fails of curse  
 Or woe, that creeps to generations far.  
 E'en thus a wave, (when spreads,  
 With blasts from Thrakian coasts,



The darkness of the deep,)  
 Up from the sea's abyss  
 Hither and thither rolls the black sand on,  
 And every jutting peak,  
 Swept by the storm-wind's strength,  
 Lashed by the fierce wild waves,  
 Re-echoes with the far-resounding roar.

## ANTISTROPH. I.

I see the woes that smote, in ancient days,  
 The seed of Labdacos,  
 Who perished long ago, with grief on grief  
 Still falling, nor does this age rescue that ;  
 Some god still smites it down,  
 Nor have they any end :  
 For now there rose a gleam,  
 Over the last weak shoots,  
 That sprang from out the race of Œdipus ;  
 Yet this the blood-stained scythe  
 Of those that reign below  
 Cuts off relentlessly,  
 And maddened speech, and frenzied rage of heart.

## STROPH. II.

Thy power, O Zeus, what haughtiness of man,  
 Yea, what can hold in check ?  
 Which neither sleep, that maketh all things old,  
 Nor the long months of Gods that never fail,  
 Can for a moment seize.  
 But still as Lord supreme,  
 Waxing not old with time,  
 Thou dwellest in Thy sheen of radiancy  
 On far Olympos' height.  
 Through future near or far as through the past,  
 One law holds ever good,  
 Naught comes to life of man unscathed throughout by woe.

## ANTISTROPH. II.

For hope to many comes in wanderings wild,  
 A solace and support ;  
 To many as a cheat of fond desires,  
 And creepeth still on him who knows it not,  
 Until he burn his foot  
 Within the scorching flame.  
 Full well spake one of old,  
 That evil ever seems to be as good  
 To those whose thoughts of heart  
 God leadeth unto woe,  
 And without woe, he spends but shortest space of time.

## IV.

It is to these choruses as well as to the vigor with which the character of Antigone is drawn that the play owes its long-lived reputation. Yet while a trace of coldness adheres to this play, against the King

*Now Stanford!*  
*reading made him mad.*

Œdipus no such charge can be brought. This tragedy is by general assent the best that Sophocles wrote, and none shows more clearly the changes that he introduced into the dramatic art. Then, too, there is perhaps some uncertainty as to how much blame is to be ascribed to the guilty king and how much is to be regarded as the work of blind fate, but to the Greeks this question may have been less important than it appears to us. The story was part of an old myth, and these myths, with all their obscurity, were practically ancient history, and were not subject to critical examination. They were frankly accepted without questioning, and even in the play, as we read it, the fault by which Œdipus falls is made to coincide with a defect in his character, and the vast impression of sympathy with the wretched hero dulls our desire to determine his strict accountability. Misery is misery, however caused; and we do not always have a case submitted to legal adjudication before granting our pity.

At the beginning of the play, Œdipus, King of Thebes, appears among the populace, who are praying at the altar for divine aid against the pestilence that is afflicting them. An aged priest, in answer to his questions, asks him, who had long been their chief supporter, to find some succor for them. He makes reply that he had already sent Creon, his kinsman, to Delphi to learn what was to be done to save the state, and just then Creon returns with the order that the city purge itself of guilt by expelling from within its walls the murderers of Laius, a former king. Œdipus is at once anxious to obey the behest of the oracle, and promises all the assistance in his power, and to carry out his purpose he consults Teiresias, the blind seer, for such revelations as he may be able to make. Teiresias, however, declines to give any satisfactory information, on the ground that by so doing he will inflict pain on Œdipus. This answer makes the king furious, and he charges Teiresias with being an accomplice of the murderers of Laius. Thereupon the seer asserts that it is Œdipus who is the defiler of the land, that he is the murderer whom they seek, and that he lives in shame with his nearest kin, and he foretells his speedy downfall. These utterances Œdipus mistakes for mere angry denunciation, and he suspects that they are part of Creon's work, and when Creon appears he accuses him of treachery. Œdipus is full of wrath and distraught with pain at the discovery that he imagines that he has made, while Creon is calm and reasonable. At the height of the quarrel, when the king has threatened Creon with death and Creon has refused to submit, Jocasta, the wife of Œdipus, the sister of Creon, appears and tries to pacify her husband. She urges him to renew his trust in Creon, and as to Teiresias, she says that his pretended knowledge is mere pretension, for long since he told Laius

that the gods had said he was to die by his son's hand, whereas he was slain by robbers, and as to their son, they pierced his ankles and cast him forth on a lonely hill when but three days old. How then could he have been his father's murderer? The truth then unrolls itself before Œdipus; he remembers how he slew a stranger on the highway, and the worst fears threaten him lest he should be proved the murderer of Laius. But he does not yet suspect that Laius was his father; he only fears lest, expelled from Thebes, he shall be a wanderer on the face of the earth, unable to visit his parents from dread of the curse that awaits him, that he shall slay his father and marry his mother. He sends for the servant who brought the news of the murder of Laius; meanwhile news is brought to Jocasta of the death of Polybus of Corinth, who was thought to be the father of Œdipus, and the inaccuracy of the oracle appears to be certain, for the hands of Œdipus were not stained with his father's blood. The queen rejoices at this news, but her husband's anxiety is not wholly allayed; the other peril, incestuous union with his mother, appears still to threaten him. The messenger, however, is able to assure him that he is not in fact the son of Polybus and Merope, but a foundling whom he himself gave to Merope, and that she brought him up as her own son. This statement unfolds the whole terrible truth to Jocasta, who entreats her husband to push his questioning no further, but he, on the track of his origin, can not pause, and when the shepherd appears who had been commissioned to make way with him but had spared his life out of pity, Œdipus plies him with eager inquiry. The whole horror then comes out; Jocasta was his mother, and had plotted her son's death to evade the oracle, which had been completely fulfilled. Œdipus in horror leaves the stage. After a lyric interlude of the chorus, a messenger enters who tells how Jocasta had hanged herself and Œdipus had blinded himself; scarcely has he finished when the doors of the palace are thrown open, and Œdipus comes forward overwhelmed with misery. Creon, on whom the government has fallen, relieves the fierce strain of unhappiness that marks this scene by his generosity. Œdipus asks that he may go into banishment, and that his two daughters, Antigone and Ismene, may be kindly cared for. He begs, too, to have them brought in:

" Could I but touch them with my hands, I feel  
Still I should have them mine, as when I saw."

The children appear, and the whole black night of tragedy is at once condensed into a form of pathos that appeals to every reader who can place himself in the position of a spectator of the acted



play. The groping hands of the guilty king and the unconscious innocence of the children present a contrast that needs no comment. It is a touch that melts the heart heavy with the slow accumulation of guilt, as some tender memorial of lost happiness brings tears to the eyes of those who are petrified with inexpressible grief.

When the father is bidden to part from them, the play ends, and the chorus utters its last injunction to call no one happy until his death.



BLINDING OF ŒDIPUS.

This tragedy certainly enforces the lesson of the vicissitudes of life, and, as it stands, it is a worthy memorial of the perfection of the Greek tragic art. Not only is the story impressive, but the way in which the incidents are accumulated and the interest is advanced from point to point is most noteworthy. The action does not move in one steady course, like the slow rising of a tide which gradually submerges the characters, but they are rather overwhelmed by successive waves. After Œdipus is charged with the murder of Laius, alarm fills the soul, but the worst dread of the fate the oracle foretells is dispelled for a moment by hearing of the death of Polybus; his fear of committing incest with his mother is temporarily removed by learning that he is not the son of Merope; only by successive steps does the truth appear, and it is in these gradations that we see the successive complications of the plot and their close interweaving.

That the ancients regarded the play as a masterpiece of skill is evident from Aristotle's many references to it as a model play, and the admiration of moderns is no less genuine. When it was brought

out is uncertain, but it was apparently after the *Antigone* and before the *Œdipus at Colonus*, that is to say, between 439 and 412 B.C.

Those who saw this play acted at Harvard College in the spring of 1881, or those who have seen any of the not infrequent representations of Greek plays, such as the *Antigone* and the *Agamemnon*, have learned what reading in the closet can scarcely teach, how wonderfully adapted for the stage are these pieces. Only by such means can one understand their vivacity and action, as well as the inaccuracy of the literary notion that they are cold and statuesque. Far from it; they abound with life and are in no way scholastic accumulations of declamatory dialogue, as they have been sometimes regarded when spelled out from a lexicon. It is to this weariness of the dictionary that is in part due the artificial solemnity of the modern imitations of Greek plays, for the difference is very great between the freedom enjoyed by men who are making literary models and the heavy bonds worn by the men who are imitating them in cold blood.

## V.

The *Œdipus at Colonus*, which had for its subject the last days of the unhappy king, is not the second part of a trilogy which is concluded by the *Antigone*. Sophocles did not present a coherent sequence of plays in that form, but rather a series of wholly disconnected tragedies. Moreover, there are discrepancies in the treatment of the legend, and varieties in the drawing of the characters, which would have been impossible had the interdependence of the separate members been designed. Thus, at the end of *King Œdipus*, that monarch moves away into exile from all human society, but in the play that is now before us we learn that he has dwelt for some time in Thebes, and is indignant with Creon and his own sons when he is sent into banishment. In the *Antigone*, again, we are told that *Œdipus* died immediately after blinding himself, and in all these plays there are great differences in the character of Creon, all of which divergences from a single design go to prove the separate intention of each of the three plays. Yet the *Œdipus at Colonus* was doubtless written with the intention of furnishing some pacifying solution to the stormy career of that unhappy hero who held so important a place in the imaginations of the Greeks; and in the plot of this play we find Sophocles making use of his own invention rather than of the current form of the legend. Yet he had authority for the turn that he gave the story in a local tradition, according to which the last days of *Œdipus* were spent within the boundaries of Attica. There he was said to have found a refuge, and to lie buried, in return for which kind-



ness he became a protecting deity of that country. Action is lent to this meager outline by representing the king as sought for in Thebes by Creon and also by Polyneices, his son. Creon makes use first of craft and then of force; Polyneices is a humble suppliant for the favors which the oracles have promised shall attend his father's presence. Creon, indeed, goes so far as to have Antigone and Ismene seized to be carried away from the helpless old man, but Theseus of Athens is at hand and puts a stop to such frowardness. The play gives even in this form but a small chance for dramatic action, which, moreover, is rendered inappropriate by the hero's age and condition, so that the whole interest centers in the art with which the comparatively placid story unfolds itself.

The play is said to have been one of the last that Sophocles wrote, and the general impression that the reader receives from it corroborates this view; the languor that pervades it, the general comprehension of old age, distinguish it from the more vivid and glowing pictures of life with which his other work is filled. Tradition says, too, as has been remarked above, that the author recited one of the choruses in disproof of the charge of senility, but, like all traditions, this one has suffered from the onslaughts of critics who have torn it to tatters, but its picturesqueness survives its certainty.

The play presents another interesting side in the comparison that it suggests with the *Eumenides* of Æschylus, and in the contrast that it presents to the austerer treatment of the earlier poet. The play of Sophocles knows nothing of the terrible side of the furies; their shrine is a holy place which Ædipus unconsciously enters without intention of desecration, and they are at once reconciled by his offerings. The divine favor immediately follows these religious rites, and he is consoled by recalling the oracle that in this place he should die. There is no moment of doubt, no prolonged conflict, as in the trial scene of the *Eumenides*; every thing moves uninterruptedly to the solemn death of Ædipus, at last pardoned and at peace. Even the tears of his two daughters are checked by Theseus, who says:

"Over those  
For whom the night of death as blessing comes,  
We may not mourn. Such grief the gods chastise."

It is, too, in the infinite grace of Sophocles when he celebrates the culture, justice, and moderation of Athens that we notice the difference between him and Æschylus, who made full use of his opportunity to terrify the spectators with ghastly scenes. Sophocles, on the other hand, lets solemn pathos and religious awe take the place of complete terror. We see another change in the dawns of the mel-





THESEUS (so-called).  
(From the East Gable of the Parthenon.)

ancholy that accompanies every period of ripe culture, as in these lines:

“ O son of Ægeus, unto gods alone  
Nor age can come, nor destined hour of death.  
All else the almighty Ruler, Time, sweeps on.  
Earth's strength shall wither, wither strength of limb,  
And trust decays, and mistrust grows apace;  
And the same spirit lasts not among them  
That once were friends, nor joineth state with state.  
To these at once, to those in after years,  
Sweet things grow bitter, then turn sweet again.  
And what if now at Thebes all things run smooth  
And well toward thee, Time, in myriad change,  
A myriad nights and days brings forth; and thus  
In these, for some slight cause, they yet may spurn  
In battle, all their pledge of faithfulness.”

This passage, by the way, it is plausibly supposed, contains a reference to the political relations between Athens and Thebes at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war. But besides this possible historical value, it contains very distinctly the mark of the period as an indication of the breaking away of the confidence and buoyancy that found expression in Æschylus. The Peloponnesian war itself is but the outward sign of the same change.

The allusions to Athens and Colonus, the poet's birthplace, have a wonderful charm, as these lines, which Sophocles is said to have recited in disproof of the charge of mental decay, will show:

• STROPH. I.

CHOR. Of all the land far famed for goodly steeds,  
Thou com'st, O stranger, to the noblest spot,  
Colonos, glistening bright,  
Where evermore, in thickets freshly green,  
The clear-voiced nightingale  
Still haunts, and pours her song,  
By purpling ivy hid,  
And the thick leafage sacred to the God,  
With all its myriad fruits,  
By mortal's foot untouched,  
By sun's hot ray unscathed,  
Sheltered from every blast;  
There wanders Dionysos evermore,  
In full, wild revelry,  
And waits upon the nymphs who nursed his youth.

ANTISTROPH. I.

And there, beneath the gentle dews of heaven,  
The fair narcissus with its clustered bells  
Blooms ever, day by day,  
Of old the wreath of mightiest Goddesses;  
And crocus golden-eyed;  
And still unslumbering flow

Kephisos' wandering streams ;  
 They fail not from their spring, but evermore,  
 Swift-rushing into birth,  
 Over the plain they sweep,  
 The land of broad, full breast,  
 With clear and stainless wave ;  
 Nor do the Muses in their minstrel choirs,  
 Hold it in slight esteem,  
 Nor Aphrodite with her golden reins.

## STROPH. II.

And in it grows a marvel such as ne'er  
 On Asia's soil I heard,  
 Nor the great Dorian isle from Pelops named,  
 A plant self-sown, that knows  
 No touch of withering age,  
 Terror of hostile swords,  
 Which here on this our ground  
 Its high perfection gains,  
 The gray-green foliage of the olive-tree,  
 Rearing a goodly race :  
 And nevermore shall man,  
 Or young, or bowed with years,  
 Give forth the fierce command,  
 And lay it low in dust.  
 For lo ! The eye of Zeus,  
 Zeus of our olive groves,  
 That sees eternally,  
 Casteth its glance thereon,  
 And she, Athena, with the clear, gray eyes.

## ANTISTROPH. II.

And yet another praise is mine to sing,  
 Gift of the mighty God  
 To this our city, mother of us all,  
 Her greatest, noblest boast,  
 Famed for her goodly steeds,  
 Famed for her bounding colts,  
 Famed for her sparkling sea.  
 Poseidon, son of Kronos, Lord and King,  
 To thee this boast we owe,  
 For first in these our streets  
 Thou to the untamed horse  
 Did'st use the conquering bit :  
 And here the well-shaped oar,  
 By skilled hands deftly plied,  
 Still leapeth through the sea,  
 Following in wondrous guise,  
 The fair Nereids with their hundred feet.

ANTIG. O land, thus blessed with praises that excel,  
 'Tis now thy task to prove these glories true.

Elsewhere we find a chorus of marked beauty :

He who seeks length of life,  
 Slighting the middle path,  
 Shall seem, to me at least,



As brooding o'er vain dreams.  
 Still the long days have brought  
 Griefs near, and nearer yet.  
 And joys — thou canst not see  
 One trace of what they were ;  
 When a man passeth on  
 To length of days beyond the rightful bourne ;  
 But lo, the helper that comes to all,  
 When doom of Hades looms upon his sight,  
 The bridegroom's joy all gone,  
 The lyre all silent now,  
 The choral music hushed,  
 Death comes at last.

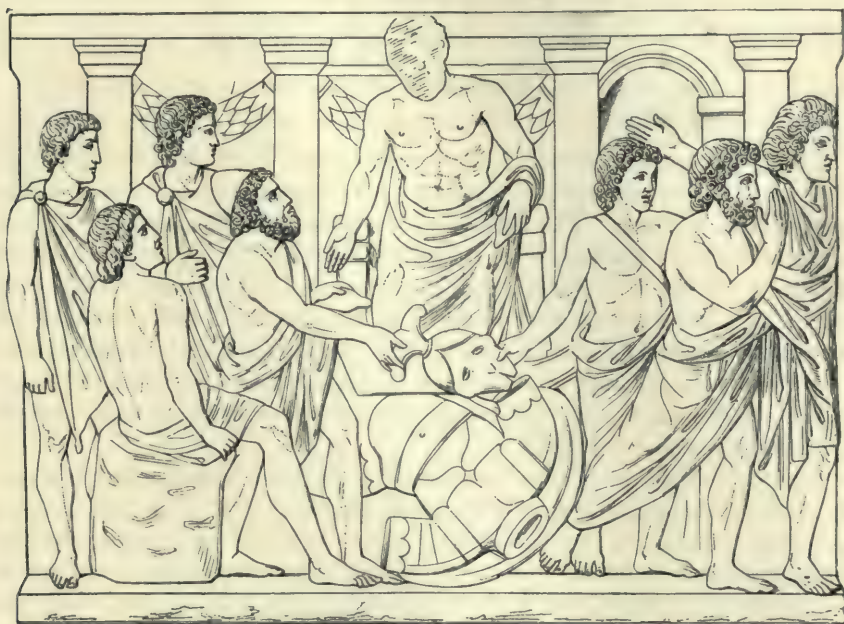
Happiest beyond compare  
 Never to taste of life ;  
 Happiest in order next,  
 Being born, with quickest speed  
 Thither again to turn  
 From whence we came.  
 When youth hath passed away,  
 With all its follies light,  
 What sorrow is not there ?  
 What trouble then is absent from our lot ?  
 Murders, strifes, wars, and wrath, and jealousy,  
 And, closing life's long course, the last and worst,  
 An age of weak caprice,  
 Friendless, and hard of speech,  
 When, met in union strange,  
 Dwell ills on ills.

And here this woe-worn one  
 (Not I alone) is found ;  
 As some far northern shore,  
 Smitten by ceaseless waves,  
 Is lashed by every wind ;  
 So ever-haunting woes,  
 Surging in billows fierce,  
 Lash him from crown to base ;  
 Some from the westering sun,  
 Some from the eastern dawn,  
 These from the noontide south,  
 Those from the midnight of Rhiparæan hills.

## VI.

In the *Ajax* of Sophocles we have what appears to be an early work of that writer, and one taken from the legendary history of the Trojan war. Already Æschylus had drawn from Homer and the other later cyclic poets; and Sophocles also, in plays that have been lost, showed a distinct preference for these authorities; nearly a quarter of his whole work was taken from the Trojan myths, Odysseus being the personage who most frequently figured either as a hero or in a secondary part. This is only natural when we consider the distinct complexity of the char-

acter of Odysseus, which would especially attract the student of psychology. That hero has what may be called modern traits, especially in contrast with the simpler incarnations of a single quality that made up the personages most commonly found in the epics. Odysseus appears, as will be seen, in this play. It opens with the goddess



CONTENTION OF AJAX AND ODYSSEUS BEFORE AGAMEMNON FOR THE ARMS OF ACHILLES.  
(*Sarcophagus relief from Ostia.*)

Athene addressing him about the madness of Ajax. Ajax was a mighty warrior among the Greeks fighting against Troy, and in his pride he had offended Pallas Athene, so that when Achilles died and it was announced that his armor should be given to the best and bravest of the army, Ajax claimed it, on the ground that he had rescued from wrong the corpse of Achilles; but Athene willed that it should be given not to him but to her favorite Odysseus. Aias in his wrath sought to slay the Atreidæ, and would have succeeded had not Athene deceived him and let him wreak his anger against the flocks and herds.

The play begins with Athene telling Odysseus of the way in which Ajax was deceived, and this she does, as a critic has observed, with a coldness and scorn that resembles the hard smile with which that deity was represented in Achaian art. She wishes Odysseus to see the hero in his madness, but his prudence makes him oppose this

plan. Yet Ajax comes forth from his tent and foretells the punishment he shall inflict on the beasts that he mistakes for the hated commanders. Athene points the moral, namely, the danger of disrespect to the gods.

"Do thou, then, seeing this, refrain thy tongue  
From any lofty speech against the gods,  
Nor boast thyself, though thou excel in strength  
Or weight of stored-up wealth. All human things  
A day lays low, a day lifts up again;  
But still the gods love those of ordered soul,  
And hate the evil."

These are her last words, and then the stage is left to human beings, who were the more especial objects of dramatic interest in the works of the later writers. The action of the play is swift: Ajax, on discovering all that he had been led to, partly by self-will, partly by the lures of the goddess, is overcome with remorse and determines to kill himself. This he accomplishes in spite of the pathetic entreaties of his wife, and his love for his infant son. After his death, Agamemnon and Menelaus, still angry, denounce the dead hero and advise that the body be allowed no funeral rites. Odysseus intervenes and opposes successfully this harshness.

This prolongation of the interest after the death of the hero, which in modern literature is a conclusion as absolute as it is in law, or as a wedding in a novel, was something more readily understood by the ancients than it is by us. The Athenians, who had recently condemned ten generals to death for neglecting to perform funeral rites over the bodies of slain soldiers, could easily comprehend, what indeed the Antigone closely shows, the importance of these ceremonies. Yet even with all possible allowance made for divergence of religious feeling, there is no doubt that it is in the scenes between Ajax and Tecmessa his wife, and when Ajax bids farewell to his son, and again to the world, that the highest interest of the play is to be found. By the side of the dignity and emotion that prevail here, the noisy insults that the Greek leaders utter over a corpse are trivial and painful. It is indeed the part that is really fine that carries the rest.

In other words, what characterizes the play as an expression of the difference between Sophocles and Æschylus is the growth of individuality in the persons represented, and, in addition to this, the frequent reference to the altered conditions of Athenian life, which is beginning to fall under the judgment and condemnation of the calm-eyed poet. "The tragic spirit," it has been said, "is the offspring of the conscience of a people," \* and here we find the conscience of the people, facing

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\* Vernon Lee's "Euphorion," i., 106.



the current political problems of the day, vividly foreseeing its perils, while the attempt is made to overcome them by preaching and example. Throughout its brief but glorious existence, Greek tragedy was full of the reflections that contemporary events cast upon it. What in Æschylus was solemn joy, awe, and serious exaltation, became a calm vision of high wisdom in Sophocles, who holds the mean between his illustrious predecessor and Euripides, who, as we shall see, was torn by a host of distracting emotions.

Here are some extracts to illustrate the noteworthy sanity of Sophocles; some emphasizing his keen eye for character, and the later ones his political wisdom:

For very shame  
 Leave not thy father in his sad old age;  
 For shame leave not thy mother, feeble grown  
 With many years, who oft-times prays the Gods  
 That thou may'st live and to thy home return;  
 Pity, O king, thy boy, and think if he,  
 Deprived of childhood's nurture, live bereaved,  
 Beneath unfriendly guardians, what sore grief  
 Thou, in thy death, dost give to him and me;  
 For I have nothing now on earth save thee  
 To which to look; for thou hast swept away  
 My country with thy spear, and other fate  
 Has taken both my mother and my sire  
 To dwell, as dead, in Hades. What to me  
 Were country in thy stead, or what were wealth?  
 For I in thee find all deliverance.  
 Yea, think of me too. Still the good man feels,  
 Or ought to feel, the memory of delight;  
 For gracious favors still do favor win;  
 But if a man forget the good received,  
 His soul no more wears stamp of gentle birth.

\* \* \* \* \*

AIAS. Lift him, then, lift him here. He will not shrink,  
 Beholding all this slaughter newly wrought,  
 If he be rightly named his father's son:  
 But we to these his father's savage ways  
 Must break him in, and make him like in soul.  
 O boy, may'st thou be happier than thy sire,  
 In all things else be like him. And not bad  
 Would'st thou be then. And yet thy lot e'en now  
 Doth move my envy, that thou feelest nought  
 Of all these evils. Sweetest life is found  
 In those unconscious years ere yet thou know  
 Or joy or sorrow. When thou com'st to this,  
 Then thou must show thy breeding to thy foes,  
 What son of what a father; but till then,  
 In gentle breezes grow, and rear thy life  
 A joy to this thy mother. And I know  
 That none of all the Achæan host will dare  
 Insult thee with foul scorn, though I be gone;  
 Such a stout guardian will I leave for thee  
 In Teucros, still unsparing for thy need,  
 Though now far off he hunts our enemies.

And ye, who bear the shield, my sailor band,  
 On you in common this request I lay;  
 Give him this message from me, home to take  
 This boy, and show him there to Telamon,  
 And to my mother, Eriboea named,  
 That he may feed their age for evermore,  
 [Till they too enter the abode of Death;]  
 And these my arms no umpires—no, nor yet  
 That plague of mine—shall to Achæans give;  
 But thou, my son, Eurysakes, be true  
 To that thy name, and holding by the belt  
 Well wrought, bear thou the sevenfold shield unhurt;  
 But all my other arms with me shall lie  
 Entombed. And now, take thou this boy indoors  
 And close the tent, and shed no wailing tears  
 Here in the front. A woman still must weep.  
 Close up the opening quickly; skillful leech  
 Mutters no spell o'er sore that needs the knife.

\* \* \* \* \*

So for the future we shall know to yield  
 Our will to God's, shall learn to reverence  
 The Atreidæ even. They our rulers are,  
 And we must yield. Why not? The strongest things  
 That fright the soul still yield to sovereignty.  
 Winters with all their snow-drifts still withdraw  
 For summer with its fruits; and night's dark orb  
 Moves on, that day may kindle up its fires,  
 Day with its chariot drawn by whitest steeds;  
 And blast of dreadest winds will lull to rest  
 Thy groaning ocean; and all-conquering sleep  
 Now binds, now frees, and does not hold for aye  
 Whom once it seized. And shall not we too learn  
 Our lesson of true wisdom? I, indeed,  
 Have learnt but now that we should hate a foe  
 Only so far as one that yet may love,  
 And to a friend just so much help I'll give  
 As unto one that will not always stay;  
 For with most men is friendship's haven found  
 Most treacherous refuge.

\* \* \* \* \*

Never in a state

Can laws be well administered when dread  
 Has ceased to act, nor can an armed host  
 Be rightly ruled, if no defence of fear  
 And awe be present. But a man should think,  
 Though sturdy in his frame, he yet may fall  
 By some small chance of ill. And know this well,  
 That he who has both fear and reverence  
 Has also safety. But where men are free  
 To riot proudly, and do all their will,  
 That state, be sure, with steady-blowing gale,  
 Is driving to destruction, and will fall.

With such a mood as this  
 There can be no establishment of law,  
 If we shall cast off those whose right prevails,  
 And lead the hindmost to the foremost rank.

Nay, we must check these things. The safest men  
 Are not the stout, broad-shouldered, brawny ones,  
 But still wise thinkers everywhere prevail;  
 And oxen, broad of back, by smallest scourge  
 Are, spite of all, driven forward in the way;  
 And that sure spell, I see, will come ere long  
 On thee, unless thou somehow wisdom gain,  
 Who, when thy lord is gone, a powerless shade,  
 Art bold, with wanton insolence of speech.

## VII.

In the *Philoctetes* we find Odysseus again, for, it must be remembered, the mythological history was of but moderate compass, so that poets and artists were continually representing according to their respective arts the same heroes and the same stories. Æschylus and Euripides treated the subject of this play; their rendering has not come down to us, but such scanty accounts of their work as have



PHILOCTETES IN LEMNOS.

reached us indicate with some distinctness the characteristic differences of the three men. Let us first examine the play of Sophocles. According to the myth, Philoctetes was one of the wooers of Helen, who being bound by an oath to defend her in case of any harm, joined the army that went out against Troy. On landing at Chryse, he rashly



trod on sacred ground and was bitten on the foot by a snake; this wound became so noisome and the outcries of Philoctetes so distracting, that he was sent under care of Odysseus to Lemnos, and there he was left, alone and untended. Meanwhile the siege of Troy dragged on for ten years. Hector, Achilles, and Ajax all died, but the city was not taken. Helenus, a son of Priam, was captured; he had the gift of prophecy and declared that Troy would fall only before a son of Achilles, with the bow of Heracles. This bow had been given by Heracles



HERACLES.

to Philoctetes, consequently the Greeks sent to Skyros for Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, and arranged that he and Odysseus should secure the bow from Philoctetes. The play opens with their landing at Lemnos. Odysseus reminds Neoptolemus of the object of their voyage and of the extreme need of securing the bow and arrows, urging the employment of deceit, if necessary, for the attainment of their object. He can not himself encounter Philoctetes because of what he had done in banishing that hero, but his guileful spirit directs the plot. At once Neoptolemus comes upon traces of the

wretched, lonely man, and the action begins without delay. Neoptolemus objects to the use of guile,

"Dost thou not count it base to utter lies?"

he asks—

"Not so, when falsehood brings deliverance,"

answers Odysseus, and the discussion goes on between the well-meaning boy and the wily master of guile, until Neoptolemus is wholly convinced by the ingenuity of his older companion. Already the art of Sophocles has brought the scene down to the conditions of human life. Neoptolemus has found in the cave no other comforts than "some leaves pressed down as for some dweller's use," and "a simple cup of wood, the common work of some poor craftsman, and this tinder stuff," together with some cast-off bandages for his foot. When Philoctetes appears, as he does presently, his coming is heralded by his groans, but his first words are the bubbling forth of eager curiosity:

"Who are ye that have come to this our shore,  
And by what chance? for neither is it safe  
To anchor in, nor yet inhabited.  
What may I guess your country and your race?  
Your outward guise and dress of Hellas speak,  
To me most dear, and yet I fain would hear  
Your speech; and draw not back from me in dread,  
As fearing this my wild and savage look,  
But pity one unhappy, left alone,  
Thus helpless, friendless, worn with many ills.  
Speak, if it be ye come to me as friends."

And when Neoptolemus answers that they are from Hellas, he goes on:

"O dear-loved sound! Ah me! what joy it is  
After long years to hear a voice like thine!"

Obviously Philoctetes is not in a suspicious mood, and when he describes his sufferings at the hands of the Greeks and since, and his grounds for wrath with Odysseus, he is ready to believe the smooth invention of Neoptolemus, who represents himself as returning homeward after being deceived by the same dishonest man. This similarity in their condition arouses the sympathy of the credulous Philoctetes, who asks Neoptolemus not to abandon him, but to carry him away from the island:

"Abandoned to these evils which thou see'st,

\* \* \* \* \*

But think of me as thrown on you by chance.  
Right well I know how noisome such a freight;  
Yet still do thou endure it. Noble souls  
Still find the base is hateful, and the good  
Is full of glory."

And he goes on to entreat the kind services of Neoptolemus with the most complete pathos and passion. The picture that he draws of his loneliness and total abandonment is to the last degree touching :

PHIL. By thy dear sire and mother, I, my son,  
 Implore thee as a suppliant, by all else  
 To me most dear, thus lonely leave me not,  
 Abandoned to these evils which thou see'st,  
 With which thou hearest that I still abide ;  
 But think of me as thrown on you by chance.  
 Right well I know how noisome such a freight ;  
 Yet still do thou endure it. Noble souls  
 Still find the base is hateful, and the good  
 Is full of glory. And for thee, my son,  
 Leaving me here comes shame that is not good ;  
 But doing what I ask thee thou shalt have  
 Thy meed of greatest honor, should I reach  
 Alive and well the shore of Æta's land.  
 Come, come ! The trouble lasts not one whole day :  
 Take heart ; receive me ; put me where thou wilt,  
 In hold, or stern, or stem, where least of all  
 I should molest my fellow-passengers.  
 Ah, by great Zeus, the suppliant's God, consent ;  
 I pray thee, hearken. On my knees I beg,  
 Lame though I be and powerless in my limbs.  
 Nay, leave me not thus desolate, away  
 From every human footstep. Bring me safe,  
 Or to my home, or where Chalkodon holds  
 His seat in fair Eubœa : thence the sail  
 To Æta and the ridge of Trachis steep,  
 And fair Spercheios is not far for me,  
 That thou may'st show me to my father dear,  
 Of whom long since I've feared that he perchance  
 Has passed away. For many messages  
 I sent to him by those who hither came,  
 Yea, suppliant prayers that he would hither send,  
 Himself, to fetch me home. But either he  
 Is dead, or else, as happens oft with men  
 Who errands take, they holding me, 'twould seem,  
 In slight account, pushed on their homeward voyage.  
 But now, for here I come to thee as one  
 At once my escort and my messenger,  
 Be thou my helper, my deliverer thou,  
 Seeing all things full of fear and perilous chance,  
 Or to fare well, or fall in evil case ;  
 And one that's free from sorrow should look out  
 For coming dangers, and, when most at ease,  
 Should then keep wariest watch upon his life,  
 Lest unawares he perish utterly.

The chorus, too, add their supplications, and Neoptolemus appears to accede, really meaning, however, to carry Philoctetes to Troy. The deceived hero turns to bid farewell to the place where he lived so long, when an attendant, disguised as a trader, makes his appearance, and carries the deception still further by pretending that Odysseus is



coming to seize him and to carry him by force, if necessary, to fulfill the oracle. Philoctetes falls into the trap and prepares to get the herb with which he allays the pain in his foot, and he promises to Neoptolemus the bow and arrows which were so much desired. When the two are ready to leave, Philoctetes is seized with an attack of pain in his wounded foot and places his weapons in the hands of his young companion. His agony is great until he throws himself on the ground and falls asleep, while is chanted a beautiful song of the chorus :

“ Come, blowing softly, Sleep, that know’st not pain,  
     Sleep, ignorant of grief,  
 Come softly, surely, kingly Sleep, and bless;  
     Keep still before his eyes  
 The band of light which lies upon them now.  
     Come, come, thou healing one.  
     \*       \*       \*       \*       \*  
 Speak gently, O my son, speak gently now  
     With ’bated breath, speak low.  
 To all whom pain and sickness make their own,  
     Sleep is but sleepless still.”

But when he awakens from his swoon it is to new terrors. Neoptolemus, after brief indecision, yields to his better nature, and, confessing his inability to carry the deceit further, exposes the plot to Philoctetes :

“ Thou must to Troia sail,  
 To those Atreidæ and the Argive host.”

Philoctetes demands his bow, which Neoptolemus refuses to surrender ; this calls forth a tremendous outburst of denunciation and entreaty :

“ By all the Gods  
 Thy fathers worshipped, rob me not of life.  
 Ah, wretched me ! He does not answer me,  
 But looks away as one who will not yield.  
 O creeks ! O cliffs out-jutting in the deep !  
 O all ye haunts of beasts that roam the hills,  
 O rocks that go sheer down, to you I wail,  
 (None other do I know to whom to speak).”

Neoptolemus wavers ; but while he is still undecided Odysseus appears and orders Philoctetes to depart ; he, however, rushes to the cliff to fling himself off it, but the sailors seize him and bind his hands ; in despair he bewails his misfortunes, praying that enemies may suffer like ills. After he has withdrawn to his cavern, Neoptolemus, who has reflected and repented, then hastens back to return the bow to its owner, in spite of the remonstrances and threats of Odysseus. Philoctetes, when the bow is in his hands, raises it to shoot Odysseus, who steals away. Neoptolemus once more beseeches the old hero to consent

to go to Troy, where he promises him his foot shall be healed. Philoctetes, however, insists on being taken home, and Neoptolemus consents, but the final solution is brought about by the appearance of Heracles, whose orders to go to Troy convince the stubborn Philoctetes.

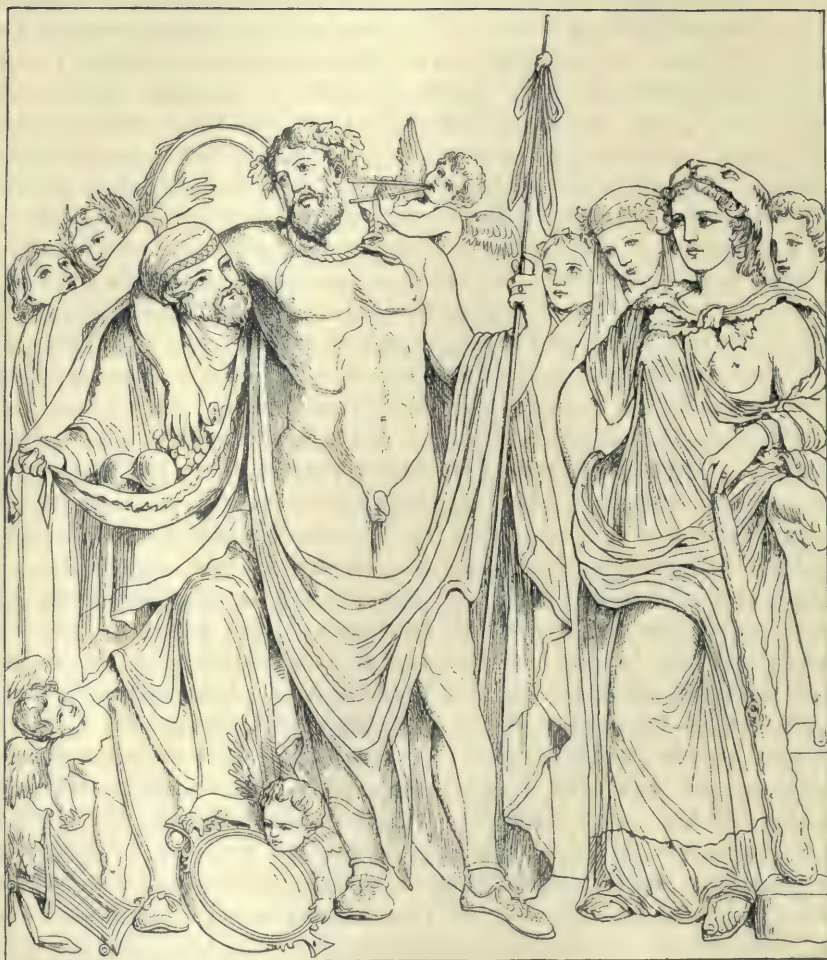
In this play more than in any we have yet examined we find the personal elements most strongly brought out; the three heroes are three different men, and the conflict that takes place between them is brought down from that lofty ether, where, if one could say it respectfully, commonplaces exercise an undue influence, to this world, where the contradictions of human characters appear in all their complexity and vigor. The stubbornness of Philoctetes is satisfactorily explained by the bitterness of his experience, and the very simplicity of his character intensifies the keenness of his emotions and the openness of their expression. Not until Shakspeare do we find in the drama equal fervor and earnestness. Neoptolemus, again, is at first imposed upon by the superior intelligence of the older and astuter Odysseus, but his baleful decision to lend himself to a gross wrong melts with shame for the injustice of his conduct. It does not break away suddenly from a notion that in a hero's mind right prevails with instantaneous force; the change is gradual and hence natural. Odysseus, on the other hand, is the legendary man of craft, about whom gathered a number of stories that celebrated the employment of wiles. It is impossible to believe that these devices of his were regarded as anything but amusing; that Sophocles could state the right as it is uttered by Neoptolemus without knowing, as a mere matter of intellectual perception, the unsoundness of the contrary fault is inconceivable. But that Odysseus was a privileged deviser of ingenious schemes who was not to be too severely judged may be readily believed. Even here he is not brought into great prominence; the interest that one feels lies between Neoptolemus and Philoctetes. It is the tragic contrast of their characters that makes this marvellous play full of interest and beauty, and full of that quality of human interest which had in time taken possession of the Greek drama. The appearance of the god Heracles merely terminates the play according to the legend; in fact, honor was victorious in the willingness of Neoptolemus to take Philoctetes to his home.

This must have been very nearly the last work of Sophocles, for it was brought out in 409, and it was in 405 that the poet died. One mark of its lateness is its modernness of feeling and plot, and the way in which the real tragic conflict is placed within the breast of Neoptolemus. These qualities mark the extreme limit to which Sophocles brought the development of Greek tragedy.

## VIII.

In the only one remaining of his plays, the *Maidens of Trachis*, we have a less valuable specimen of his work. The uncertainty of the date at which it was brought out, and its comparative inferiority have become the pretext for discussions as violent as various. Some have held that it is so poor that Sophocles could not have written it, but that it was composed by Iophon, the poet's son, or some such inferior author. This assertion, which rests on no solid foundation, is denied by others, who maintain that it is undeniably the work of Sophocles; but a difference of opinion again arises as to whether its faults are those of early or of late years. It certainly lacks the qualities that are discernible in the plays that are known to have been written towards the end of the poet's life, and the languor and timidity of its construction bear a strong likeness to the fumbling of a beginner. A certain ease of workmanship is tolerably sure to survive in old age, even when other qualities have faded away, as we see in the later works of Goethe and Corneille. This play opens with Deianeira lamenting the absence of her husband, Heracles, who is atoning for a homicide, by command of Zeus, through a year's service in the employment of Omphale in Lydia. At the suggestion of a nurse, Deianeira sends out Hyllos, her son, to get news of his father. Then the chorus appear praying for tidings of the absent Heracles. Deianeira's grief and loneliness are clearly marked in her address to the chorus, wherein she envies their immunity from the cares of married life. A messenger enters, in advance of Lichas the herald, with the joyful tidings that Heracles is victorious, for which his wife is duly grateful, and soon the herald appears with Iole and a group of captive women whom Heracles had sent to her. She is filled with pity for their sad lot, and is especially interested in Iole, whose beauty attracts her, and she questions her about her family. Iole, however, makes no answer, and this device of eloquent silence is one that Æschylus often used, as in the beginning of the *Prometheus*, and in the protracted speechlessness of Atossa in the *Persians*. Meanwhile Deianeira expresses the most tender sympathy for the poor captive. When they are gone in, the messenger stops Deianeira and tells her that Iole is loved by Heracles, and that it was in order to gain her that he captured her city. When Lichas returns, she questions him closely and finds this evil news confirmed. Her grief at these disclosures is most delicately represented. It is not the modern romantic mixture of insulted dignity and contemptuous scorn, but rather a passive regret for an acknowledged weakness that inspires her. To bring back her husband's love, she





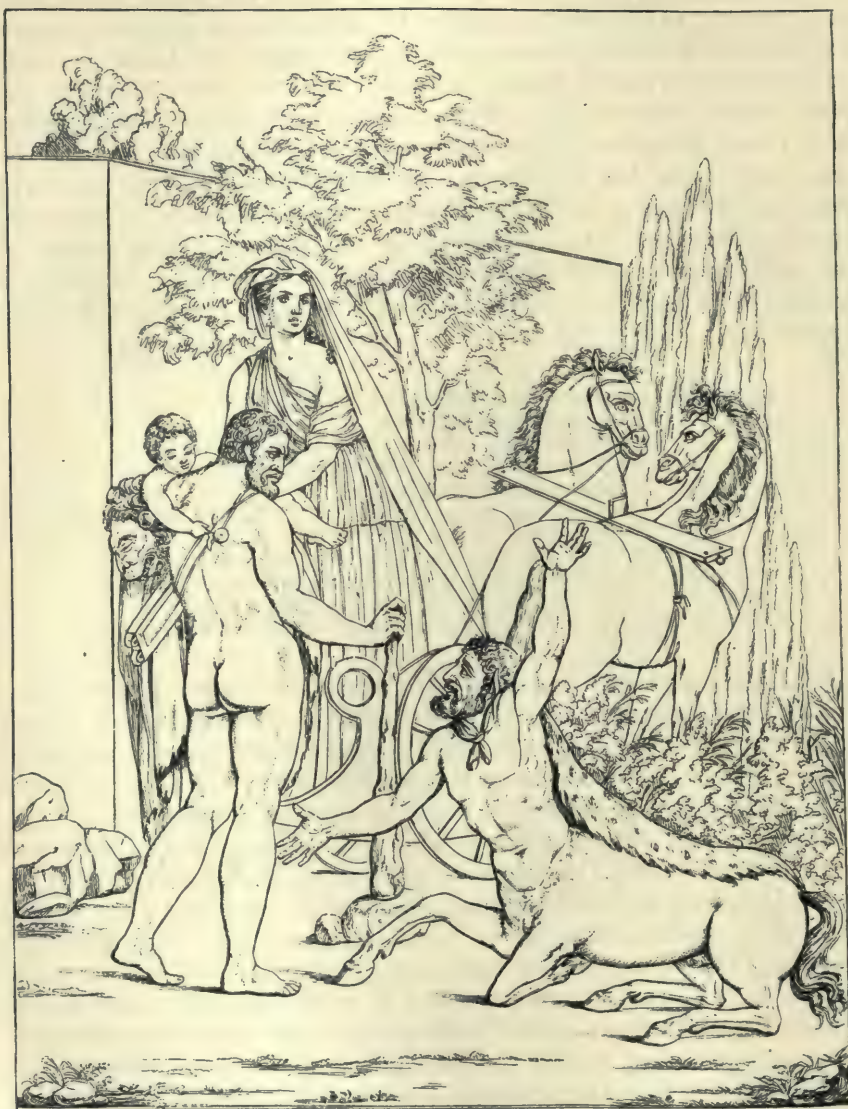
HERACLES AND OMPHALE.  
(Pompeian Wall-painting.)

determines to apply the blood of a Centaur to a robe to be sent to her husband, which she had been told would work as a love-charm, and the chorus approve of her plan. In accordance therewith she entrusts the garment to <sup>Nessus</sup> ~~Nessus~~ to carry to Heracles, but no sooner is he gone out of reach than she discovers the baleful effect the blood had had on some wool, which it wholly destroyed, and the whole horror of her plan becomes clear to her. Hyllos returns with the news that she has in fact slain Heracles in just that way, and he prays that she may receive justice for her evil deeds. In her remorse she runs from the stage, and the sad scene of her death at her own hands is described by an attendant. The conclusion of the play is of a mythological sort, and lies outside of the modern view of the drama. Heracles is brought in on a couch, suffering fearful torments and lamenting his sudden fate:

"Leave me to sleep, yes, leave me, wretched one;  
 Leave me to sleep my sleep.  
 Where dost thou touch me? Where move?  
 Death thou wilt bring; yea, bring death.  
 What awhile knew repose  
 Now thou dost stir again;  
 It grasps me, creeping still.  
 Where are ye, of all men that live on the earth most ungrateful?  
 For whom I of old, in all forests and seas, slaying monsters,  
 Wore out my life; and now, when I lie sore smitten before you,  
 Not one of you all will bring the fire or the sword that will help me."

When he asks to see Deianeira, the whole story is recounted to him, and he turns from that to utter new prophecies. He orders his funeral in Cæta, where his body is to be burned, and Hyllos reluctantly promises to carry out his father's wishes, to burn him there, and then to marry Iole. Heracles then leaves the stage to meet his speedy end.

Even this arid description will make it clear that the play lacks the unity of most of the Greek plays; not only is the interest divided between Deianeira and Heracles, but, more than this, the final scenes have to us moderns the air of incoherent addition. The domestic tragedy is terminated with a legendary ending. If this was an early play, it may be that Sophocles felt that in following his bent towards developing the human interest in his plays, he had not learned the difficult art of blending it with the imperative mythological setting, and even in the first part the attempt to combine the interests of Heracles and his wife causes rather division than union. Although the play contains many passages of great beauty, it is at times, especially at the beginning, not free from an unaccustomed heaviness and slowness of movement. The art of narration which fills so important a part in the play is not yet brought into proper relation with the necessity



HERACLES AND NESSUS.  
(Pompeian Wall-painting.)



of dramatic movement. The complexity of Sophocles is not yet the perfect master of its instrument; that quality, if this was in fact an early work, was only acquired later.

In reviewing the total impression of what has come down to us from the hands of Sophocles, what strikes us is the calmness and self-possession of his art, a quality that is more readily perceived than described, for the nearer an object comes to perfect beauty the more difficult it is to define it except with that one word. When it has marked qualities that give one side more prominence than another, we are no longer dumb. In English literature, for example, Milton has been described with exactness, whereas countless volumes have struggled with Shakspeare, and his work, at its best, yet defies the most industrious commentators to say just wherein its merit lies. In the same way the rounded perfection of Sophocles baffles any one who tries his hand at conveying a full impression of his many attractive qualities. Yet the field in which he worked may be stated, even if the degree of his merit can only be admired and not conveyed by analysis. What he did was to bring into the vast machinery of the drama the human being. How well he did this only his plays can show, but even in the pallor of translation his truthfulness and earnestness appear, and, above all, the dignity and seriousness of his work. This dignity is not an artificial quality built up on conventionality and morbidly fearful of indecorum, which partly defines the French tragedy as it appears to foreigners. There is none of the modern dread of simplicity, the literary gentility, as we may call it, which is afraid of simple phrases and compels ordinary words and phrases to be made over into fine language, so that birds shall be "the feathered songsters," and the sky "th' ethereal vault." Nor does an artificial decorum chill the action; the most unreal of the Greek heroes is ready to break forth into violence. In the King *Œdipus*—as those who have seen it acted will remember—the hero moves and acts as well as suffers, with all the vivacity of a Shaksperian character. The resemblance to Shakspeare lies deep. The English poet, living when he did, was the mouthpiece of two contradictory movements, that of the Renaissance and that of mediævalism, and these two currents are as clearly visible in his plays as are two mingling rivers at their point of junction. Yet in Sophocles we see the same qualities, less vividly contrasted, though potentially existing in the absence of conventionality and the readiness with which attendants and such minor characters as the guard in *Antigone* are represented. The more important resemblance between them lies in that they both felt the greatness of human life, and both sympathized as well as perceived and described. The greater wealth of modern times is reflected in the later poet, but the seriousness is common to both.

## CHAPTER IV.—EURIPIDES.

I.—The Changes in Greek Literature and in the Body Politic.—An Illustrative Quotation from Mr. J. A. Symonds. II.—The Life of Euripides, and an Attempt to Explain His Relation to His Predecessors—His Movement toward Individuality not a Personal Trait, but Part of a General Change. The Religious Decadence; Political Enfeeblement. III.—The Work of Euripides; its Abundance—The Hecuba—The Prologue as Employed by this Writer. IV.—The Orestes and its Treatment.—The New Treatment of the Heroes as Human Beings.—The Phenician Virgins.—The Medea; its Intensity—Extracts. V.—The Crowned Hippolytus.—Realism in the Treatment of the Characters.—The Further Change in the Importance of the Chorus.

### I.

IN Euripides we notice that another step is taken. An excellent description of the change is given by Mr. J. A. Symonds in his "Studies of the Greek Poets" (Amer. ed., ii, 34): "The law of inevitable progression in art from the severe and animated embodiment of an idea to the conscious elaboration of the merely æsthetic motives and brilliant episodes, has hitherto been neglected by the critics and historians of poetry. They do not observe that the first impulse in a people toward creativeness is some deep and serious emotion, some fixed point of religious enthusiasm or national pride. To give adequate form to this taxes the energies of the first generation of artists, and raises their poetic faculty, by the admixture of prophetic inspiration, to the highest pitch. After the original passion for the ideas to be embodied in art has somewhat subsided, but before the glow and fire of enthusiasm has faded out, there comes a second period, when art is studied more for art's sake, but when the generative potency of the earlier poets is by no means exhausted. For a moment the artist at this juncture is priest, prophet, hierophant, and charmer, all in one. More conscious of the laws of beauty than his predecessors, he makes some sacrifice of the idea to meet the requirements of pure art; but he never forgets that beauty by itself is insufficient to a great and perfect work, nor has he lost his interest in the cardinal conceptions which vitalize the most majestic poetry. During the first and second phases which I have indicated the genius of a nation throws out a number of masterpieces—some of them rough-hewn and Cyclopean, others perfect in their combination of the strength of thought with



grace and elevated beauty." In fact, the perfected work succeeds the earlier crudities, as would be expected and is proved by comparing Sophocles with Æschylus. To go on, however: "But the mine of ideas is exhausted. The national taste has been educated. Conceptions which were novel to the grandparents have become the intellectual atmosphere of the grandchildren. It is now impossible to return upon the past—to gild the refined gold or to paint the lily of the supreme poets. Their vigor may survive in their successors; but their inspiration has taken form forever in their poems. What, then, remains for the third generation of artists? They have either to reproduce their models—and this is stifling to true genius—or they have to seek novelty at the risk of impairing the strength or the beauty which has become stereotyped. Less deeply interested in the great ideas by which they have been educated, and of which they are in no sense the creators, incapable of competing on the old ground with their elders, they are obliged to go afield for striking situations, to force sentiment and pathos, to subordinate the harmony of the whole to the melody of the parts, to sink the prophet in the poet, the hierophant in the charmer."

This interesting hypothesis is further corroborated by the instances which Mr. Symonds brings forward from the history of the fine arts, as, for example, the growth of Greek sculpture, from its crude beginning, through perfect beauty in the hands of Pheidias to the somewhat cloying luxuriance of Praxiteles. "In architecture," he says truly, "the genealogy of Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders points to the same law," which he further illustrates from modern painting by pointing to the relative position of Giotto, Raphael, and Correggio. In fact, as Mr. Symonds remarks, "this law of sequence is widely applicable. It will be seen to control the history of all uninterrupted artistic dynasties," and we may go further and affirm that no law controls the action of the mind with regard to a certain class of objects without being one of universal application. In government, for instance, which certainly bears but slight resemblance to the fine arts, we may observe how inevitably the application of such a principle as that of civil-service reform produces first enthusiasm, then discreet application, which is followed by the development of the same principle in minute details. In physics we see the same uniform sequence, whereby the glow of discovery is in time succeeded by the ingenious utilization of the principle in common life.

Still it is true that seldom do we have left us such marked instances of the law of literary development as Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and just as it is hard to describe a straight line, or time, or life, or any of the things that we understand instinctively, while deviations



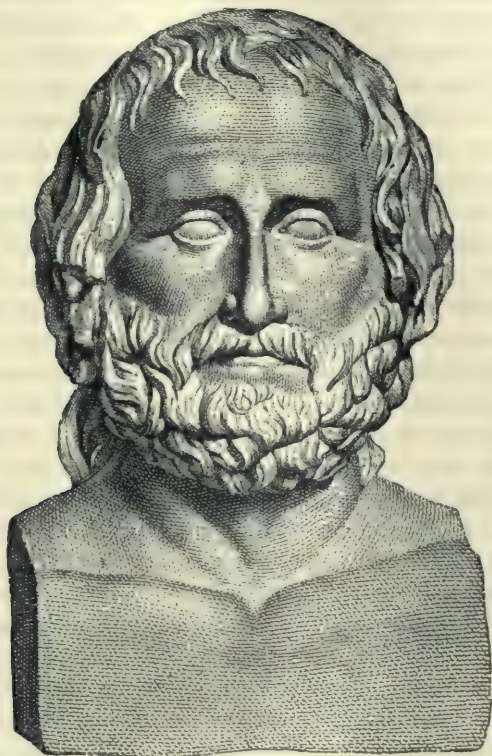
from intelligible things can be readily defined, so it is easy to persuade one's self that writers who differ from a recognized standard are thereby detestable. *Æschylus* for centuries suffered by comparison with *Sophocles*, and now, or until very recently, it is the turn of *Euripides* to be treated with contempt instead of judicious admiration. Fortunately the duty of a historian is to describe, and not to lead the applause or the hisses. For him to do nothing but praise the great poets would be like a botanist cheering *Bartlett pears*, or, if it be objected that even these pears are too common, then cheering the century plant. In the same way, the student is more profitably employed in observing the respects in which *Euripides* resembles or differs from his predecessors than in deriding or simply praising his various qualities.

## II.

While *Euripides* thus appears to belong to a much later and very different generation, he was a contemporary of *Sophocles* and often his competitor in theatrical contests. He was born in 480 B.C., the year of the battle of *Salamis*, and, we are told, on that island. Indeed, a later legend declared that he was born on the very day of that battle, although this statement may be an inaccuracy that arose from the pardonable desire of bringing the three greatest tragedians into close connection with the most glorious events of Athenian history. On the other hand, the statement, though practically immaterial to us, may be true, and only to be denied as probably will be denied, in the remote future, the undoubted fact that *John Adams* and *Jefferson* died on the same day, the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. *Sophocles*, who was about fifteen years the elder, survived *Euripides* a few months, dying in 406. In correlating the plays of the three great tragedians, we must remember that they were separated by no great distance of time, the respective dates of their births being about 525 B.C., 495 B.C. and 480 B.C.; that *Æschylus* fought at *Marathon*, *Sophocles* took part in the pæan for the battle of *Salamis*, and that on the day of the battle, or thereabouts, *Euripides* was born.

The accounts of the early life of *Euripides* are few and various. He appears to have been a man of considerable culture; he had a large library; mention is made of pictures that he painted; he is said to have busied himself with metaphysical studies and to have been a friend of *Socrates* and of *Anaxagoras*. Indeed this fuller, more complex culture penetrates the whole work of *Euripides*; this is penetrated by all the fervor and stress of the swiftly developing artistic and literary life of Athens. The spirit which animated *Æschylus* was something like that flowering of the Renaissance which we see in

Milton; he rested on the long and complicated growth of the lyric poets as Milton rested on the revival of learning. Sophocles perfected this quality and brought it to its full fruition. When the rising tide of intellectual excitement had made its way into all the nooks and corners of men's interests, this new spirit, or, rather, this modification of the old spirit, inevitably found expression in literature, just as Pope's com-



EURIPIDES.

pacter treatment of the couplet with its narrower but subtler thought succeeded Dryden's vigor, and as Tennyson's mosaic work is built up on Keats's broader handling of romantic verse. There is a similar difference between Corneille and Racine. The mere mechanical construction of the verse is a symbol as well as an expression of the deeper underlying change, and the plays of Euripides, especially the later ones, abound with examples of the influence of contemporary study and speculation. There is nothing from which it is so impossible for a man's mind, as well as his body, to escape as from the day of his birth, and in these plays we shall see his treatment of religious



myths, his scepticism, his dialectic skill, reflecting the current life of his day.

It is said that Euripides was trained for athletic sports, but in such a way that he conceived a great dislike for them and for those who practiced them. His married life appears to have been quite as unhappy as that of a poet should be. His second wife led him an unpleasant life, and one of the charges brought against him by Aristophanes was that of being a woman-hater. He certainly had a keen eye for the foibles of women, and doubtless his own unfortunate experience embittered his representation of the sex in his plays, but the charge is a singular one to come from the lips of Aristophanes, who denounced women with far more severity than did his tragic contemporary. Moreover, it is a familiar fact that the reasons assigned by men for their dislike of their neighbors are often nothing but plausible pretexts to secure the sympathy of others, and to not properly define the real cause of hatred. The motives of Aristophanes are to be discussed later; of Euripides it may be said that he certainly showed a fondness for choosing heroines who were led by passion to great excesses, but he is not accurately defined by being called a woman-hater.

Like Æschylus, Euripides died away from Athens. He was not, however, like his great predecessor, driven away by unkind treatment. He left his home on the invitation of King Archelaus, of Macedonia, who was doing his best to raise that country to the level of the higher civilization of Athens, and for that purpose was summoning to his capital distinguished men, as Frederick of Prussia and Catherine of Russia in the last century, and as Hiero of Syracuse earlier, gathered in poets and philosophers for delight and improvement. In his stay at this court Euripides repaid his poet's hospitality by writing, at the king's request, a tragedy, Archelaus, wherein he celebrated the founder of the dynasty. This is, unfortunately, lost, but the fact that it was written is interesting, as showing, what scarcely needed proof, that a Greek tragedian could write a play that bore a close relation to existing circumstances. It was here that he died about 406 B.C., at Arethusa, the tradition telling us that he was attacked by dogs at night and that he did not recover from their wounds.

His stay in Macedonia illustrates the widespread interest in Athenian work, and just as the artists of that city were summoned to other cities their statues were purchased by rulers who were anxious to decorate their lands. In the same way there arose a demand among foreigners for the writings of the most eminent tragedians. Greek players traveled abroad, as English players did at the time of Shakspeare, and as actors of all nations do now. Euripides was called on for plays to be brought out in other places. His *Andromache*, for example, was



written for the stage at Argos, and this is not the only proof of the way in which Athenian culture was spreading over civilization. Yet it frequently happens that what attracts the mentally alert foreigners is something that but slowly makes its way in the greater social complexity of the land that produces it. Of late years the last results of science in the hands of Darwin, Spencer, and Huxley have found more unreserved following among young men in Russia—to say nothing of America—than in England, and while to the foreigner Euripides was probably the most brilliant writer in Athens, in that city he was much disliked. He won the first prize but five times, and in general there is but little doubt that the attacks of Aristophanes found as much approval in the hearts of the Athenians as did those against Socrates. This is the price that he paid for representing in literature the disintegration that was befalling life and thought in that city.

It would be an unsatisfactory explanation of the differences between Euripides and his great predecessors that should ascribe these solely to the fact that the last of the three poets was born with an accidental tendency towards irreverence, which inspired his novel treatment of the drama. It would be equally exact to say that the inventor of the telephone was born with an inherent tendency towards the study of electricity, without taking into account the conditions and direction of science at his time. Even those who go further and call Euripides the poet of the ochlocracy or mob rule, as the later democracy is called, utter only part of the truth, for the decay of democracy was in fact but one expression of the general development of the Athenian culture which also manifested itself in the plays of Euripides, as in the heresies of Socrates and the scientific spirit of Anaxagoras. In the political changes of Athens one can trace only the normal result of the corruption and aggressiveness of the citizens working the ruin of the state, and in these tragedies we see the poet trying to reconcile the tangled web of human life with some satisfactory substitute for the vanishing religious beliefs. The change was not in the mind of Euripides alone; it was one that extended throughout society, that manifested itself in political experiments, distrust in the old religion, and the enfeeblement of the grand impulse that had animated the fine arts. Naturally his position won him enemies; there are always men who believe that evil can be averted by doing over by rote what has once been done with real enthusiasm, and those who held this belief attacked him with severity; but he had the younger generation on his side and he became the favorite tragedian of later times, the one who had most authority among the Romans and so for a long time among the moderns. After all, Greece is not so remote as it sometimes appears; there are many men now living, generally, it will be noticed, holding places of authority,



MEGARA AND SALAMIS.

who regret that literature is following its own course, and earnestly commend, for instance, that novelists imitate Walter Scott. This is precisely the form of advice that was given to Euripides with the same success.

We have seen how Sophocles was also carried in this direction, though to a far less extent. He still retained confidence in the gods or in something behind the gods, but this Euripides has lost. When the mind of the older poet was forming, Athens was enjoying its brief hour of triumph; Euripides was born to later and sadder days, when misfortune brought doubt and despair. Scarcely any thing is more noteworthy in the intellectual history of Greece than the way in which that country outgrew the religion it had inherited from a remote past. That polytheism was already old and could not stand the examination which it was sure to receive from a most intelligent race that applied its reason to every question; it was equally incompetent to endure scientific analysis; nor could it atone for its pitifulness in these respects by inculcating a lofty and sensitive morality. The Greek gods appeared disreputable, while a taint began to affect their legitimacy. The ruin of Athens, which arose very naturally from the love of dominion that follows, as well as in good measure constitutes, success, further disturbed men's minds. The higher powers could be acknowledged so long as things went well. In the hour of defeat their impotence proved their untrustworthiness. There was nothing on which the Athenian mind could rest; morality had no anchorage, science did not exist. It is this pathetic confusion that we see reflected in the plays of Euripides.

### III.

Euripides rivalled his predecessors in fertility at least. He is said to have written ninety-two plays, of which nineteen have come down to us; of these one, the *Rhesus*, is manifestly the work of some later and far inferior writer. We have, then, more of his work than of the two others together, but, unfortunately, it is not always the best pieces that have been preserved. Seven of them, however, survived on their merits as the most important and characteristic ones for school use. These are the *Hecuba*, *Orestes*, *Phœnissæ*, *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *Alcestis*, and *Andromache*. The original collection contained more, but these seven were finally determined to be enough, just as the first six books of the *Æneid* and eight orations of Cicero were not long ago adjudged sufficient for boys' schools. The remaining eleven plays have depended on chance for their preservation; what survived mice and mould and fire was copied and so handed down to us.



The Hecuba still retains its position as a text-book and is one of the best known of the author's plays. It was brought out apparently about 425 B. C., and represents the misfortunes of the Trojan queen. After the fall of Troy a harsh fate robs her of her daughter Polyxena, who is sacrificed at the grave of Achilles, and her son Polydorus is murdered by his Thracian host, Polymestor; she revenges herself, however, by slaying the children of the Thracian king and putting out his eyes. Certainly the tragic element is not wanting. It is not, however, brought out with the usual Greek art which let the development be an inherent part of the plot: for it is only by the accident that a slave goes to the shore to fetch water for the funeral rites to Polyxena that the body of Polydorus is found cast upon the beach by the waves. Yet this coincidence is not of a sort to offend us moderns, and the intensification of the Queen's sufferings by this new horror is made to develop all the fury of vengeance which stands in marked contrast with the earlier pathos. This pathos is prominent in delineations of Polyxena, whose first sorrow on hearing of the fate that awaits her is for her mother's bereavement. She thinks nothing of herself, and afterwards she preserves a lofty resignation and pride, especially when she asks the Greeks that she may not be bound, and compelled, after living a princess, to submit to the indignity of dying like a slave. Euripides knew full well the path to the hearts of his audience, as this extract will show:

- POLYX. Io, mother, my mother, what means thy cry?  
 What message strange for me bade thee stir me from my dwelling  
 To startle me forth with amaze, like a fluttering bird?
- HECUBA. My child, my child!
- POLYX. Why address me in despair? thy first words bode me ill.
- HECUBA. Alas for the loss of thy life.
- POLYX. Speak forth, no longer hide it.  
 I tremble, my mother, I tremble.  
 Why art thou moaning?
- HECUBA. Child, O child of an ill-starred mother.
- POLYX. What message is this thou announcest?
- HECUBA. The Argives in conclave decreed thy slaughter  
 By common consent, at the tomb  
 Of the son of Peleus.
- POLYX. Alas, my mother, how void of gladness  
 Are these ills thou speakest! Make it plain,  
 O mother, explain.
- HECUBA. My speech is a speech of evil, my child,  
 And I tell thee the Argives decreed  
 By their vote to dispose of thy life, woe is me!
- POLYX. Oh, thy dread sufferings! O my mother all wretched,  
 Ill-starred in thy life.  
 Dread, oh dread is the bane,  
 Most hateful, most unspeakable,  
 Which a god stirred against thee.  
 I thy daughter live now no longer, no more

Wretched with thy wretchedness shall I share  
 The lot of slavery  
 For me like some youngling in the upland reared  
 By the kine, from thy wretched arms in misery snatched  
 Thou shalt be borne away.  
 From thy side, by death and slaughter  
 Conveyed to the dark underearth, where with the dead  
 In misery I shall abide.  
 Thee now, wretched mother of my life,  
 I mourn for with sobs and lamentations.  
 My own life, the bane and the outrage of it,  
 I mourn not for that, a better fortune befalls me  
 In this that I must die.

CHORUS. Hither Odysseus' steps are hastening  
 With words of new import for Hecuba.

ODYSSEUS. Woman, thou knowest, I think, the host's decree  
 And fixed enactment, yet I will inform thee:  
 The Greeks require thy child Polyxena  
 For slaughter on Achilles' heaped-up tomb.  
 And they dispatched me to convoy the maid;  
 Her escort I, the offering's high-priest  
 And overseer will be Achilles' son.  
 Hear now, what thou must do! wait not for force  
 Choose not the ways of utter strife with me,  
 But heed resistless might and the calamity  
 At hand! By wisdom schooled e'en woe learns prudence.

HECUBA. Behold! My supreme trial here impends  
 With moanings brimmed, and not unfraught with tears,  
 Methinks I should have died when I was spared,  
 Whom Zeus slays not but saves, that I, undone,  
 The utterness of woes on woes may see.  
 If though, when with their masters bond-slaves speak,  
 It breeds no rank offence and hath no sting  
 For them to crave full answer, then speak thou  
 And to my questions let me hear response.

ODYSSEUS. 'Tis granted, ask. I grudge thee not my leisure.

HECUBA. Knowest thou what time thou cam'st to Ilium,  
 A spy in loathsome garb, when from thine eyes  
 Coursed drops of death and bathed thy very chin?

ODYSSEUS. I know. More than my outmost soul these stirred.

HECUBA. When Helen knew, when only I was told?

ODYSSEUS. Well I remember what great risk I ran.

HECUBA. When thou in prayer most humbly soughtst my knees?

ODYSSEUS. Yea, when my hand died in thy raiment folds.

HECUBA. Then thou wert my slave. Speak what saidst thou then?

ODYSSEUS. Long was my plea and subtle for my life.

HECUBA. Was't I who spared thee, I who helped thee home?

ODYSSEUS. Else how should I the sun's light see to-day?

HECUBA. Shows not thy wicked heart in these thy courses,  
 Since all my kindness done thee, though confessed  
 Brings me no help but wins thy utmost harm?  
 O ingrate brood of men, who babbling strive  
 For worldly honor, I'll not know you even,  
 You ruin those you love, yourselves unmoved,  
 If aught you speak can please the common rout.  
 What wit, I ask, what wisdom found therein  
 Won men to vote the slaughter of my child?  
 Did honor prompt this human sacrifice  
 Over a grave, where slaughtered kine are seemlier?  
 Or, rightfully resolved to slay his slayers,

Mayhap Achilles presses for her death !  
 But surely she has done no wrong to him.  
 Let him crave Helen's slaughter on his tomb :  
 She wrought his ruin. She brought him to Troy.  
 Say you a captive maid must die, most choice  
 And excellent in beauty—'t is not me.  
 Still stands the beauteous child of Lyndarus  
 Matchless, nor have we matched the harm she did you.  
 So much in justice's name and rights I plead.  
 Hear now what debt of gratitude thou owest  
 And pay my due. Thou sayest thy hand seized mine  
 And thou didst fawn once on this withered cheek.  
 Even so I seize thy hand and touch thy cheek.  
 That kindness I require, I cry thee mercy.  
 Tear not my darling from these arms away,  
 Slay not my child. Enough have died ere now.  
 She is my joy, makes me forget my ills.  
 My consolation, she, for much I lost,  
 My home, my staff, my helpmeet, and my guide.  
 Let not the strong use strength for wrong,  
 Nor say in joy they shall not some day weep,  
 For I once flourished, now my life is death,  
 My stores of happiness one day engulfed.  
 I charge thee by thy beard hear thou my prayer,  
 Have pity ; seek the Achæan host and speak  
 Persuasive words, 'tis malice bids you slay  
 The women whom at first you did not kill,  
 But from the altars seized, and spared them then.  
 The law you live by shields alike the slave  
 And freeborn man from death by violence.  
 Thy influence, though even men shall revile thee,  
 Must win. The self-same plea, by noted lips  
 And lips unnoted framed, is not the same.

CHORUS. There lives no man whose heart is hardened so  
 That by thy cries and lingering lament

ODYSSEUS. Of woe unstirred, he should not weep for thee.  
 Learn wisdom, Hecuba ; let not thy anger  
 Make him who speaks thee fair thy seeming foe.  
 Thy life, through which my fortunes came to mend,  
 I bind myself to save, I say nought else.  
 But what to all I spake I'll not gainsay :  
 Troy taken, now he who was our foremost warrior  
 Asks his tomb and must have thy slaughtered child.  
 It breeds infection in our commonwealths  
 Whene'er a righteous and a loyal man  
 Wins not some higher meed than those less worthy.  
 Achilles earned what honors we can give,  
 Woman, his glorious death defended Greece.  
 Wer't not a shame if, while he saw the light,  
 We *used* the friend whom we *abuse* when dead ?  
 So be it : then what must men say when next  
 Our marshalled host sees strenuous war draw nigh ?  
 " Are we to fight or to consult our ease,  
 Seeing that he who falls no honor gets ? "  
 In truth while life still lasts, from day to day  
 A scant supply were quite enough for me.  
 My grave, though, I would fain see revered,  
 For gratitude must always be long-lived.  
 Thou pleadest thy despair, my answer hear :  
 With us are those who claim no less our pity,



And some are old, yea, older even than thou,  
 Some are young wives whose valiant husbands fell  
 Where now the dust of Ida hides their bones.  
 Bow to thy fate ; while we if we do err  
 In honoring the brave must stand for fools.  
 Thou and thy barbarous kindred all have friends  
 But love them not, when brave men die for you  
 You marvel not, and this helps Greece to triumph,  
 And makes your fortunes match your foolishness.

CHORUS. Alas ! what ills outrageous bondage has  
 For slaves, unbearable and yet endured.

HECUBA. My daughter, vanished are my words, my plea  
 Assailed the air in vain to save thy life.  
 With greater than thy mother's skill, plead thou.  
 Use thou all Philomela's tearful notes  
 And importune him for escape from death.  
 A tearful suppliant, grasp Odysseus' senses ;  
 Win him with words ; thou hast good arguments ;  
 Since he has children thou shalt move his heart.

POLYX. I see thee thrust, Odysseus, thy right hand  
 Beneath thy cloak, and with averted face  
 Turn from me, lest with suppliant hand I reach  
 Thy beard. Take heart, my prayers shall not molest thee  
 Lead, for I follow where strong fate requires,  
 Fate and my love of death. Should I refuse  
 It would betray a base and craven heart.  
 Why must I live ? My father once was king  
 Of Phrygia, thus life first was known to me,  
 And then by bright hopes nurtured I grew up  
 A bride for kings. And men grew jealous, too,  
 Of him whose home and hearth might some day claim me.  
 Once mistress of Ida's women, all  
 Among all maids once singled out, all me !  
 The equal then of gods, wer't not for death,  
 And now a slave ! The very name of slave  
 Makes me in love with death — it sounds so strange.  
 Nay more, some master fierce at heart mayhap  
 I yet shall find, bought with a price, even I,  
 Sister of Hector erst and many brothers,  
 Forced in his house to grind his corn and cake,  
 To sweep his house and ply the loom for him ;  
 My life through him shall be long agony.  
 Yea, and my bed a slave from somewhere bought  
 Shall soil, though once men deemed me fit for kings.  
 No ! No ! my eyes renounce this light of day ;  
 Still free, my body I consign to Hades.  
 Odysseus, take me hence, guide and despatch me ;  
 I see no hope, no expectation, naught  
 That gives me heart or shows me joys to come.  
 My mother, stand not thou against my will  
 With word or deed. Give me thy counsels, help  
 To die, ere by dishonor I am shamed.  
 Who has not known the bitterness of woe  
 Must wince when he must bear its galling yoke.  
 More blessed far were he in death than thus  
 Alive. For life dishonored means great woe.

CHORUS. Dread is the mark and plain for men to see  
 Which stamps the nobly born, their high repute  
 Proves nobler than their birth when they are worthy.

HECUBA. Honor inspires thy words, my child, but honor

Has with it pain. If Peleus' son must needs  
His pleasure have, and you must shun his blame,  
O then, Odysseus, leave her still not slain,  
Lead me away even to Achilles' tomb,  
Unsparing pierce me. I brought Paris forth  
Who aimed the shaft that ruined Thetis' son.



PARIS AIMING AT ACHILLES.

- ODYSSEUS. Good woman, not thy death but hers required  
Achilles' ghost, and hers the Greeks must grant.
- HECUBA. Oh then, — but will you kill me with my child?  
So shall the draught of blood be twice as much  
Which earth and he who asks for hers shall have.
- ODYSSEUS. This girl's one death suffices, we'll not add  
One more, I would we owed not even one.
- HECUBA. No power must part us, with my child I die.
- ODYSSEUS. Is't truth? have I who know it not some master?
- HECUBA. As to an oak I cling to her like ivy.
- ODYSSEUS. Not if thou heedest wiser thoughts than thine.
- HECUBA. I'll not submit and let my daughter go.
- ODYSSEUS. No more will I depart and leave her here.
- POLYX. Hear reason, mother, thou, Laertes' son,  
Deal gently with a parent's wounded heart,  
Thou must not strive against the strong, poor mother,  
Wouldst fall to earth and tear thy aged flesh.  
When force had sundered us and flung thee back  
Shall younger strength deface thy seemliness?  
All this awaits thee—nay, not so — 'twere shameful,  
And now, my mother dear, thy darling hand  
Stretch out and let my cheek press close to thine.  
Never again, once now and never more,  
Light from the orbèd sun I am to see.  
Hear thou the last of all my greetings given,  
Oh mother mine, I leave thee now to die.
- HECUBA. And I, my daughter, still must live a slave.
- POLYX. Unwed, defrauded of my marriage song.
- HECUBA. My child, thou art undone and I despair.
- POLYX. O I shall lie apart from thee in death.
- HECUBA. What shall I do? Where go to end this life?
- POLYX. My sire was free, yet I must die a slave.
- HECUBA. The childless mother I of many children.
- POLYX. To Hector, to thy aged spouse, what word?

HECUBA. Say that none lives on earth with woes like mine.

POLYX. O bosom, breasts which some time nursed my life.

HECUBA. O doom untimely of my wretched child.

POLYX. My mother, fare thee well, farewell Cassandra.

HECUBA. Others may fare thee well, thy mother shall not.

POLYX. My Polydorus, fare thee well in Thrace.

HECUBA. He may have died to round my tale of woe.

POLYX. He lives and he shall close thine eyes in death.

HECUBA. My anguish is my death before I die.

POLYX. Away! Odysseus, veil me in these folds;

Before you slay me I am dead at heart,

Slain by her cries whom I with wailing slay—

My mother. O light, I still may use thy name,

Not thee, save while the journey lasts that parts

The sword and Achilles' funeral pyre from me.

HECUBA. Ah me! I faint. My limbs give way and fail,

O daughter, take thy mother, give thy hand—

Give, leave me not childless. My friends, I die.

Oh but to see the Dioscuri's sister—

Laconian Helen, whose most beauteous eyes

Made hideous hell in blessed Troy that was.

Breeze, breeze from the ocean deep

That conveyest sea-faring craft

Swift barks o'er the high-swelling floods,

Whither wilt thou convoy me in my woe,

By whom enslaved, a chattel in whose house

Am I to sojourn on arriving?

Dost thou bear me off to a roadstead in Dorian lands?

Or in Phthia where

The father of goodliest water streams,

(Men say) Apidanus fattens the furrowed fields,

Or to what one among islands convoyed

By the sea-smiting oar— wilt thou bring me

To drag on a pitiful life indoors—

Is it the isle where the palm first grew,

Where the laurel its first hallowed shoots raised upward

For Leto—well beloved,

To comfort her awful travail?

And there with Delian maids

Shall I praise goddess Artemis' bow and her fillet of gold?

Is it the city of Pallas,

Throned in a beauteous chariot, I am to visit,

And there yoke young steeds on her saffron robe,

On the richly fashioned flower-spangled web

Broidering them, or even the Titan race,

With Zeus, son of Cronos, lulling them to rest

With the flash of his flames?

Woe is me for my offspring,

For my fathers, for my fatherland,

Which, washed by smoke, lies ravaged

And taken by the spear of the Argives,

And I in a land of strangers

And called by the name of slave—

I have left the land of Asia

And exchanged it for Europe,

Where I find the bridal chamber of Hades.

It is in passages like this that we may notice the resemblance between the plays of Euripides and those of the followers of Shakspeare. The



grand ethical simplicity of the great masters is lost, but the pathos of separate scenes is even keener and intenser in the later poets.

This change, which is one of those most characteristic of Euripides, is accompanied by another, the use of the prologue to state very clearly what is going to happen in the play; and the design of this contrivance has called forth much discussion. Since, however, the main effort of Euripides was to excel in the pathetic treatment of his incidents, and he often, for this purpose, modified the usual construction of the myths, he may have employed the prologue in this manner in order to fix the attention of his spectators on his own art. Nowhere could the modern attraction of surprise have found itself a place in Greek tragedy. Throughout, familiar legends were told and retold as symbols of great truths; and for them a prologue was not needed. When a man is interested in the pathology of the emotions, in their keen analysis, the importance of the plot as in itself an object of interest is sure to dwindle, as we see in the very modern novel, in which the story sinks into insignificance by the side of the accurate portrayal of thoughts and feelings. In Euripides probably similar causes brought forth similar results.

Undoubtedly, too, the prologue was of great service in diminishing the necessity which lies heavy upon every dramatic writer, of making clear who are his characters and what are the conditions in which he proposes to exhibit them. Generally this exposition requires the whole of the first act, and we all know its tendency to make this part of the play a piece of conventionality, almost as artificial as a prologue thinly disguised by a dialogue in which old servants recount as much previous history as is necessary for the information of spectators. On the other hand, we may see in the first act of *Macbeth* how skilfully the state of affairs could be exhibited, and its perfection may be profitably compared with the cruder methods in *As You Like It*. Occasionally, as in the *Hippolytus*, the prologue of Euripides goes further and announces what shall be the conclusion of the dramatic action. By so doing no play was set at any disadvantage in comparison with the others, because the myths on which all rested were matters of common knowledge, and the exact form of treatment—which was the main object of interest—yet remained to be developed. In general, however, the spectator was brought only to the point where the action began, and was free to observe the treatment with very good knowledge of the point to be reached. Some of the prologues have not reached us; others are supposed to have been composed by the actors. But, whoever composed them, the prologues are there, and have been a continual object of abuse for those who are too glad to seize any opportunity to blame Euripides.

The prologue of the *Hecuba*, spoken by the shade of her murdered son, informs the audience of his bloody end, and leaves the black cloud overhanging his distressed mother through the early part of the play, while she is still ignorant of his fate, and so intensifies rather than relieves the gloom of the tragedy. The spectator knew, though *Hecuba* herself did not, the additional blow that was awaiting her, and his sympathy was doubled. A more pathetic play than this can hardly be imagined, or one better fitted to serve as an example of the great pathos and intense personal interest that Euripides introduced into the solemn tragedy. Its severity was tempered by the human sympathy that he aroused, and he moved in the direction in which the people were moving.

#### IV.

In the *Orestes* we find the confusion that distinguishes Euripides most clearly marked, and we are as far as possible removed from the directness and simplicity of what we have previously seen in Greek tragedy. The story, which was perfectly familiar to all his fellow-citizens, and had been treated by *Æschylus* and *Sophocles*, receives here a novel turn. *Orestes* is represented as punished with madness for murdering his mother. When the populace decide that he shall die for this ill deed, *Pylades* urges him to revenge himself on *Menelaus* by killing *Helen*. But the gods take up *Helen* from them, and *Electra* delivers *Hermione* to them, and they were about to kill her, when *Menelaus* came in and endeavored to take the palace by storm. They anticipated his purpose and threatened to set it on fire. But *Apollo* appeared, saying that he had carried *Helen* to the gods, and bade *Orestes* marry *Hermione*, and *Electra* to live with *Pylades*, then *Orestes*, being freed from the taint of the murder of his mother, was to reign over *Argos*. Yet this incomplete outline does not in the least touch the tone in which the play is written. Instead of heroes, to whom there attaches a notion of grandeur and solemnity, we have citizens bearing the heroic names, who discuss their actions in the most everyday fashion. The wildness of the plot is evident, and easily explicable, for, since there was no single animating idea to be conveyed by the poet, the interest could be maintained only by the accentuation of the new personal element. The best way to accomplish this was by employing a variety of incidents and emotions. In our own time, when certainly the stage is not put to any great use as a moral instructor, the interest of the spectator is kept alive by unexpected incidents. The tragedy of Euripides was debarred from this method by its employment of the prologue, wherein the whole story was told, so that



the audience, knowing what they had to expect, were free to see how it was represented. The poet's skill was devoted to the analysis of character, and here was his greatest success, in showing the play of passions and emotions. This made more prominent the fragmentary character of his plays; literary art was in a state, not unfamiliar to men of this generation, in which the parts were far better than the whole, and lines and passages were effective, while the play as a whole left a vague or unsatisfactory impression. It was not the whole character that he brought out, but flashes of ingenious and unexpected feeling.

The *Philoctetes* of Sophocles is still heroic, although we may trace the effect of the work of Euripides, and of the changing times, in the humanity of that stubborn character. But Euripides is far more of a realist; he lets the ludicrousness and vividness of life appear in a way that very naturally shocked his enemies, who held that tragedy had nothing to do with

actual life. In the *Hecuba* one of the Trojan women who composed the chorus tells how she was binding her braided hair with fillets fastened on the top of her head, and was looking into the golden mirror, getting ready to go to bed, when suddenly a tumult filled the streets, and it was known that the Greeks had made an entrance into the city. In the *Orestes* there is a scene between the hero and a Phrygian slave that is comical in its nature, so much so that it has been suggested that this and other parts of the play were meant for parodies of other tragedies.

This may be true, but it is a harsh view to take of any man, even a tragedian, that his jokes can be understood only after an interval of two thousand years. At any rate, it is clear that Euripides was willing to employ even ridicule to make his plays vivid and life-like. The external form of the older work survived, just as an echo of the full-mouthed Elizabethan tragedy was whispered softly in Dean Milman's plays, even so late as the first quarter of this century. This comparison must not lead us too far, however, for while Dean Milman was making a plaster-cast of





an old play, Euripides was trying to breathe new life into the old models. This play shows how many were the incidents that were meant to take the place of the earlier simplicity. It was brought out in 408 B.C., and was the last of the plays that he wrote in Athens.

The Phœnician Virgins, which stands next in the collection, was composed at an uncertain date. Again we have the crowded stage, for nearly all the woes of the Theban royal house are presented in a long procession in this tragedy, which makes up for the absence of a single overwhelming passion by the abundance of separate pathetic scenes. No greater contrast can be imagined than that which this busy play presents to the simplicity and bare narration of *The Seven* against Thebes, and no other tragedy more thoroughly represents the inevitable tendency of literature to proceed from large outlines to the rendering of slight details, the same difference that we see in



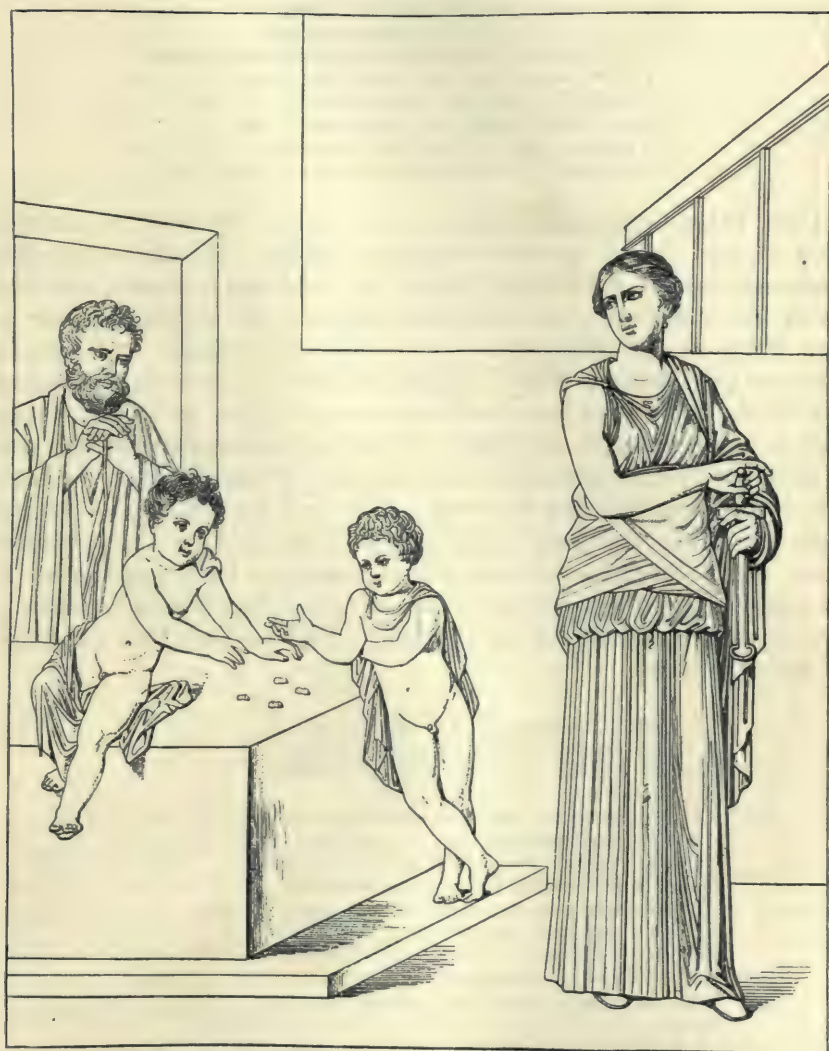
JASON SUBDUES THE FIRE-BREATHING BULLS OF AIETES AND STEALS THE GOLDEN FLEECE.  
(*Sarcophagus Relief*.)

the novel of the present day, when we compare it with the generous treatment of the *Waverley* novels, and that is further illustrated in another branch of work by the division of scientific study among specialists.

The *Medea*, which was produced in 431 B.C., is one of the masterpieces of Euripides. The play was brought out in competition with Euphorion, the son of Æschylus, who probably gave some of his father's plays, and Sophocles, who received the first and second prizes respectively, while the third was given to Euripides. This is far from being the only instance in the brief history of Greek tragedy of the failure of a great play, although in this case it must be remembered that the *Medea* is the only surviving member of the tetralogy. It remains a model of the peculiar merit of its author before his later manner. The story of the *Medea* is simple and is told with great directness. She is the wife of Jason, who had profited by her aid in getting the Golden Fleece and had married her. Later he fell in love with Glauke, the daughter of Creon, and married her. The subject of the play is the wild wrath and jealous fury of *Medea* at his desertion. She is sentenced to exile by Creon, who fears her anger, but she succeeds in getting twenty-four hours' delay, in which time she sends to the new bride of Jason deadly gifts by which she perishes, and, moreover, she slays her own and Jason's children. She is carried away, with the bodies of her children, by Ægeus, in a chariot, and betakes herself to Athens. This whole bloody history was treated by Euripides with masterly skill. His ingenious drawing of the infuriated wife showed how close was his observation, how delicate his sympathy. Gods and goddesses are in distant Olympus, but two of the eternal elements of human nature, maternal love and the fierceness of jealousy, are caught and set down for the delight of centuries. The play advances in excitement from the moment it begins, and the old nurse utters her forebodings of trouble as *Medea* lies without tasting food, her body sunk in grief, dissolving all her tedious time in tears, since she knew that her husband had wronged her.

"And will not raise her eyes, nor from the ground  
Lift up her face. As a rock might or sea-wave,  
Does she hear those who love her counselling her."

It is with impressive art that *Medea's* wails are heard behind the scenes, utterly distraught as she is and yearning for death. When she appears, it is with an expression of regret for the miserable condition of women, and of her determination to find revenge in some way, and the chorus of Corinthian women freely express their sympathy. When Creon enters and orders her into banishment, she argues most ably: "Never," she says,



MEDEA CONTEMPLATING THE SLAUGHTER OF HER CHILDREN.  
(*Pompeian Wall-painting.*)



"Never fits it one born prudent-souled  
 To have his children reared surpassing wise;  
 For, added to their blame of lavished time,  
 They win cross envy from their citizens.  
 For, offering a new wisdom unto fools,  
 Thou shalt be held a dullard, not a sage:  
 And, if deemed more than those who make a show  
 Of varied subtleties, then shalt thou seem  
 A mischief in the city. Yea, myself  
 I share this fortune; for, being wise, I am  
 To some a mark for envy, and to some  
 Abhorrent. Yet I am not very wise."

There is but little doubt that Euripides knew very well the world he lived in, and this is further to be seen in the skill with which this passionate woman is driven to decide by just what measures she shall wreak her vengeance; her only thought is of the means, whether to burn them, to cut their throats, or to take the straight and familiar path and give them poison. While she tries to persuade Creon, and commands herself for her own purposes, she does not spare Jason, who, naturally enough, does not hold an advantageous position, and he does not protect himself by assuring Medea that although she hates him, he could never wish her evil. This cold civility has its natural effect; and Medea's lashing tongue, as it were, flays the wretched Jason, who feebly tries to show what advantages have come to her in her new home. The great scene, however, is when Medea is debating with herself the murder of her children. This has been thus translated by Mr. Symonds:

"O, children, children! you have still a city—  
 A home, where, lost to me and all my woe,  
 You will live out your lives without a mother!  
 But I—lo! I am for another land,  
 Leaving the joy of you: to see you happy,  
 To deck your marriage bed, to greet your bride,  
 To light your wedding torch shall not be mine!  
 O me, thrice wretched in my own self-will!  
 In vain, then, dear my children! did I rear you;  
 In vain I travailed, and with wearing sorrow  
 Bore bitter anguish in the hour of childbirth!  
 Yea, of a sooth, I had great hope of you,  
 That you should cherish my old age, and deck  
 My corpse with loving hands, and make me blessed  
 'Mid women in my death. But now, ah, me!  
 Hath perished that sweet dream. For long without you  
 I shall drag out a weary doleful age.  
 And you shall never see your mother more  
 With your dear eyes, for all your life is changed.  
 Woe, woe!  
 Why gaze you at me with your eyes, my children?  
 Why smile your last sweet smile? Ah, me! ah, me!  
 What shall I do? My heart dissolves within me,  
 Friends, when I see the glad eyes of my sons!"

I can not. No! my will that was so steady,  
 Farewell to it. They, too, shall go with me.  
 Why should I wound their sin with what wounds them,  
 Heaping tenfold his woes on my own head?  
 No, no; I shall not. Perish my proud will.  
 Yet, whence this weakness? Do I wish to reap  
 The scorn that springs from enemies unpunished?  
 Dare it I must. What craven fool am I  
 To let soft thoughts flow trickling from my soul!  
 Go, boys, into the house; and he who may not  
 Be present at my solemn sacrifice—  
 Let him see to it. My hand shall not falter.  
 Ah! ah!  
 Nay, do not, O my heart! do not this thing!  
 Suffer them, O poor fool—yea, spare thy children!  
 There in thy exile they will gladden thee.  
 Not so: by all the plagues of nethermost hell  
 It shall not be that I, that I should suffer  
 My foes to triumph and insult my sons!  
 Die must they: this must be, and since it must,  
 I, I myself will slay them, I who bore them.  
 So it is fixed, and there is no escape.  
 Even as I speak, the crown is on her head;  
 The bride is dying in her robes—I know it.  
 But since this path most piteous I tread,  
 Sending them forth on paths more piteous far,  
 I will embrace my children. Oh, my sons,  
 Give, give your mother your dear hands to kiss!  
 Oh, dearest hands, and mouths most dear to me,  
 And forms and noble faces of my sons!  
 Be happy even then: what here was yours,  
 Your father robs you of. Oh, loved embrace!  
 Oh, tender touch and sweet breath of my boys!  
 Go! go! go! leave me! Lo, I cannot bear  
 To look on you: my woes have overwhelmed me!  
 Now know I all the ill I have to do:  
 But rage is stronger than my better mind,  
 Rage, cause of greatest crimes and griefs to mortals."

In the whole Greek drama it would be hard to find a speech more compact of personal emotion than this vivid representation of the conflict in a woman's heart between fury and maternal love. Often in the Greek plays we find argumentative speeches defending one course of action, or describing some incident; here we have a soliloquy unfolding the internal strife, and thus being an almost transparent medium between Medea's anguished heart and the spectator. The epical element of narration has vanished, we have here the direct delineation of passion. Thanks to this quality, the play has lived triumphant in modern literature, for it appeals directly to a universal human sympathy.

An interesting fact about this play is that it was preceded by one from the hands of Neophron, of which there is left a fragment of the speech in which his Medea determines to kill her children. It has been thus translated by Mr. Symonds:

" Well, well ; what wilt thou do, my soul ? Think much  
 Before this sin be sinned, before thy dearest  
 Thou turn to deadliest foes. Whither art bounding ?  
 Restrain thy force, thy god-detested fury.  
 And yet why grieve I thus, seeing my life  
 Laid desolate, despitefully abandoned  
 By those who least should leave me ? Soft, forsooth,  
 Shall I be in the midst of wrongs like these ?  
 Nay, heart of mine, be not thy own betrayer !  
 Ah me ! 'Tis settled. Children, from my sight  
 Get you away ! for now blood-thirsty madness  
 Sinks in my soul and swells it. Oh, hands, hands,  
 Unto what deed are we accoutred ! Woe !  
 Undone by my own daring ! In one minute  
 I go to blast the fruit of my long toil."

It is not too much to say that this reads like a first draft of the more complicated speech that we find in Euripides. If we had been more fortunate in recovering the lost work of the second-rate dramatists we should then see more clearly than we now do the gradual unfolding of the various tendencies of Greek tragedy. The fragments left to us are too scanty to serve as anything but faint indications of the abundance of plays :

CHORUS.

*Strophe I.*

No hope left us now for the children's life ;  
 No hope ; they are passing on to death ;  
 And the gift that comes to the new-made wife  
 Is the gift of a curse in her golden wreath.

Alas for her doom !  
 Round about her yellow hair  
 Her own hand will set it there,  
 Signet jewel of the tomb.

*Antistrophe I.*

By the grace and the perfect gleaming won  
 She will place the gold-wrought crown on her head,  
 She will robe herself in the robe ; and anon  
 She will deck her a bride among the dead.

Alas for her doom !  
 Fallen in such snare, too late  
 Would she struggle from her fate,  
 Hers the death-lot of the tomb.

*Strophe II.*

But thou, oh wretched man, oh woeful-wed,  
 Yet marriage-linked to kings ; thou, all unseeing,  
 Who nearest fast

A swift destruction to thy children's being,  
 A hateful death to her who shares thy bed,  
 Oh hapless man, how fallen from thy past !

*Antistrophe II.*

And miserable mother of fair boys,  
 We mourn too, thy despair with outburst weeping,  
 Thine who wouldst kill  
 Thy sons for the wife's couch where lonely sleeping  
 Thy husband leaves thee for new lawless joys



With a new home-mate who thy place shall fill.

ATTENDANT.

Mistress, thy children are forgiven from exile :  
And in her hands the queenly bride, well pleased,  
Received the gifts. Thence good-will to thy sons.

MEDEA.

Alas !

ATTENDANT.

Why dost thou stand aghast when thou hast prospered ?

MEDEA.

Woe's me !

ATTENDANT.

This chimes not with the tidings I declare.

MEDEA.

Woe's me again !

ATTENDANT.

I have not heralded mischance I know not,  
And missed my joy of bringing happy news.

MEDEA.

Thou hast brought what thou hast brought : I blame thee not.

ATTENDANT.

Why then dost droop thine eyes and dost weep tears ?

MEDEA.

There is much cause, old man. For this the gods  
And I by my own wild resolves have wrought.

ATTENDANT.

Take heart. For through thy sons thou'lt yet return.

MEDEA.

Alas ! I shall send others home ere that.

ATTENDANT.

Thou 'rt not the only one torn from her sons,  
And being mortal lightly shouldst bear griefs.

MEDEA.

And so I will. But go thou in the house,  
Prepare my children what the day requires.  
Oh sons, my sons, for you there is a home  
And city where, forsaking wretched me,  
Ye shall still dwell and have no mother more ;  
But I, an exile, seek another land,  
Ere I have joyed in you and seen you glad,  
Ere I have decked for you the nuptial pomp,  
The bride, the bed, and held the torch aloft.  
Oh me ! forlorn by my untempered moods !  
In vain then have I nurtured ye, my sons,  
In vain have toiled and been worn down by cares,  
And felt the hard, child-bearing agonies.  
There was a time when I, unhappy one,  
Had many hopes in you, that both of you  
Would cherish me in age, and that your hands,  
When I am dead, would fitly lay me out—  
That wish of all men : but now lost indeed  
Is that sweet thought, for I must, reft of you,  
Live on a piteous life and full of pain ;  
And ye, your dear eyes will no more behold  
Your mother, gone into your new strange life.

Alas! Why do ye fix your eyes on me,  
 My sons? Why smile ye on me that last smile?  
 Alas! What must I do? For my heart faints,  
 Thus looking on my children's happy eyes.  
 Women, I cannot. Farewell my past resolves,  
 My boys, go forth with me. What boots it me  
 To wring their father with their cruel fates,  
 And earn myself a doubled misery?  
 It shall not be, shall not. Farewell resolves.  
 And yet what mood is this? Am I content  
 To spare my foes and be a laughing-stock?  
 It must be dared. Why, out upon my weakness  
 To let such coward thoughts steal from my heart!  
 Go, children, to the house. And he who lacks  
 Right now to stand by sacrifice of mine,  
 Let him look to it. I'll not stay my hand.  
 Alas! Alas!

No, surely. O my heart, thou canst not do it;  
 Racked heart, let them go safely, spare the boys:  
 Living far hence with me they'll make thee joy.  
 No; by the avenging demon-gods in hell,  
 Never shall be that I should yield my boys  
 To the despitings of mine enemies.  
 For all ways they must die, and, since 'tis so,  
 Better I slay them, I who gave them birth.  
 All ways 'tis fated: there is no escape.  
 For now, in the robes, the wealth upon her head,  
 The royal bride is perishing; I know it.  
 But, since I go on so forlorn a journey,  
 And them too send on one yet more forlorn,  
 I'd fain speak with my sons. Give me, my children,  
 Give your mother your right hands to clasp to her.  
 Oh darling hands, oh, dearest lips to me;  
 Oh forms and noble faces of my boys!  
 Be happy: but *there*. For of all part here  
 Your father has bereft you. Oh sweet kiss,  
 Oh grateful breath and soft skin of my boys!  
 Go, go. I can no longer look on you,  
 But by my sufferings am overborne.  
 Oh I do know what sorrows I shall make,  
 But anger keeps the mastery of my thoughts,  
 Which is the chiefest cause of human woes.

## CHORUS.

Oftentimes now have I ere to-day  
 Reached subtler reasons, joined higher debates,  
 Than womanhood has the right to scan.  
 But 'tis that with us too there walks a muse  
 Discoursing high things — yet not to us all,  
 Since few of the race of women there be,  
 (Thou wert like to find among many but one),  
 Not friendless of any muse.  
 And now I aver that of mortals those  
 Who have never wed, or known children theirs,  
 Than parents are happier far.  
 For the childless at least, through not making essay,  
 If sons be born for a joy or a curse,  
 Having none, are safe from such miseries.  
 But such as have springing up in their homes  
 Sweet blossom and growth of children, them

I see worn with cares through the weary while :  
 First how to rear them in seemly wise  
 And how to leave the children estate ;  
 Then next, whether they are spending themselves  
 For ignoble beings or for good,  
 That is left dark from their ken.  
 But one last ill of all, to all men  
 Now will I speak. For if they have found  
 Sufficing estate, and their children have waxed  
 To the glory of youth, and moreover are good,  
 If their lot have chanced to them thus, lo Death,  
 Vanished back to his Hades again,  
 Has snatched the forms of the children away.  
 And what avails it for children's sake  
 To have the gods heap on mortals' heads  
 This bitterest, deadly despair ?

MEDEA.

Friends, now for long abiding the event,  
 Eager I gaze for what shall come of it ;  
 And now discern a servitor of Jason's  
 Advancing hither. And his gasping breath  
 Declares him messenger of some dire news.

MESSENGER.

Oh thou who hast wrought a horrible wild deed,  
 Medea, fly, fly, sparing not care of the waves,  
 Nor chariot hurrying thee across the plains.

MEDEA.

But what hath chanced to me worth such a flight ?

MESSENGER.

The royal maiden is this moment dead,  
 With Creon her father, by thy magic drugs.

MEDEA.

Thou hast told sweetest news. From henceforth rank  
 Among my benefactors and my friends.

MESSENGER.

What sayest thou ? Lady, hast thou thy right wits,  
 Nor rav'st, who, having outraged the king's hearth,  
 Joy'st at the hearing and dost nothing fear ?

MEDEA.

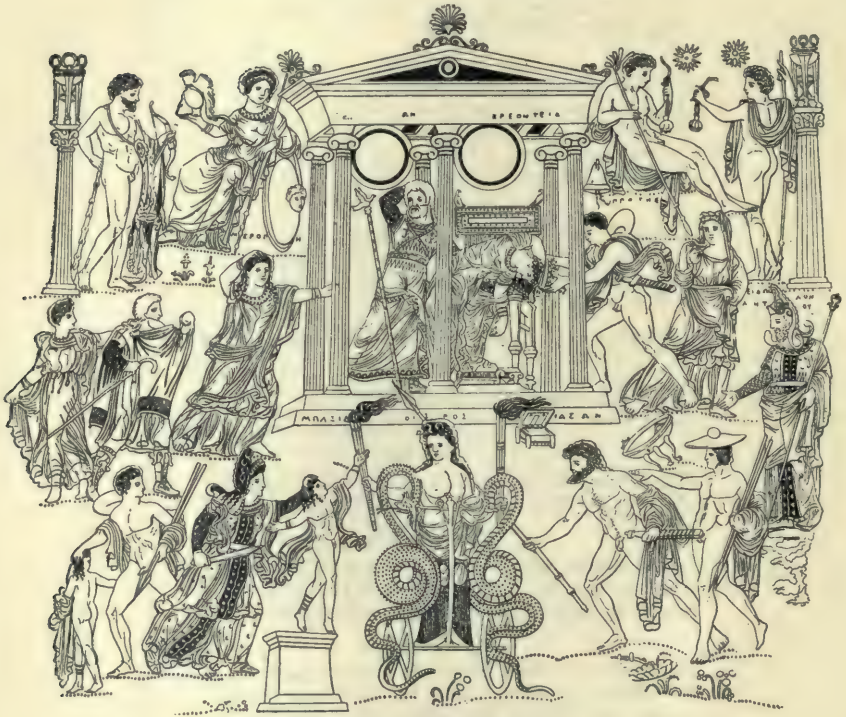
Somewhat in sooth I have to answer back  
 To these thy words. But be not hasty, friend.  
 Come, tell me how they died. For twice so much  
 Wilt thou delight me if they died in torments.

MESSENGER.

When then the boys, thy two sons, had arrived,  
 And with their father entered the bride's house,  
 We servants, who were troubled for thy griefs,  
 Rejoiced : and much talk shortly filled our ears,  
 Thou and thy husband had made up past strife.  
 One kissed the hand and one the golden head  
 Of thy young sons, and I myself, for joy,  
 Followed the boys into the women's halls.  
 But our mistress, whom we serve now in thy place,  
 Before she saw thy sons come side by side,  
 Kept her glad gaze on Jason : then ere long



She hid her eyes and turned away from him  
 Her whitened face, loathing the boys' approach.  
 But thy husband checked his young bride's heat and rage,  
 Thus speaking : " Be not rancorous to thy friends,  
 But cease thy wrath and turn again thy head,  
 Counting those dear who 're to thy husband dear.  
 Take then their gifts, and of thy father pray  
 He spare for my sake my boys' banishment."  
 And when she saw the gauds she said no nay,  
 But spoke her husband sooth in all. And ere  
 The father and the boys had gone far forth  
 She took the shimmering robes and put them on,  
 And, setting round her curls the golden crown,



SCENES FROM THE MEDEA.  
 (Drawing from Amphora.)

At the bright mirror stroked her tresses right,  
 And smiled on the mute likeness of herself.  
 Next, risen from her couch, flits through the room,  
 Daintily tripping on her milk-white feet,  
 With the gifts overjoyed, often and long  
 O'er her slant shoulder gazing on herself ;  
 But then a sight came dread to look upon,  
 For a change comes on her hue ; she staggers back,  
 Shuddering in every limb, and scarce wins time  
 To fall upon her couch, not to the ground.

Then an old waiting-dame, who deemed the wrath  
Of Pan or other god had come on her,  
Shrilled the prayer-chaunt ; I trow before she saw  
The white foam oozing through the mouth, the eyes  
Start from their sockets strained, the bloodless flesh.  
For then, far other wailing than her chaunt,  
Came her great shriek. Straight to the father's house  
Rushed one, another to the new-wed husband,  
To tell of the bride's fate ; and all the house  
Was ringing with incessant hurrying steps.  
By this might a swift walker stretching limb  
Have touched the goal of the six plethra course,  
And she, who had been speechless, with shut eyes,  
Fearfully moaned, poor wretch, and started up :  
For twofold anguish did make war on her,  
For both the golden crown set round her head  
Was sending marvelous streams of eating fire,  
And the fine-webbed robe, the offering of thy sons,  
Was gnawing at the hapless one's white flesh.  
But she, sprung from her couch, now flies, ablaze,  
Tossing her head and curls this way and that,  
Fain to dash off the crown. But all too firm  
The golden headband clave ; and still the fire  
Flamed doubly fiercer when she tossed her locks,  
And, conquered by her fate, she drops to the floor,  
Scarce, but by her own father to be known :  
For neither the grave sweetness of her eyes,  
Nor her fair face was visible ; but blood  
Mingled with flame was welling from her head,  
And, by the secret poison gnawed, her flesh  
Dropped from the bones, as resin-gouts from the fir,—  
Dreadful to see. And none dared touch the dead,  
For her fate had we to our monitor ;  
But the hapless father, through his ignorance  
Of how she perished, having ere we knew  
Entered the chamber, falls upon the corse,  
Breaks instant into wailing, and, her body  
Enfolded in his clasp, he kisses her,  
Thus calling on her, " Oh, unhappy child,  
What god hath foully done thee thus to death ?  
Who makes this charnel heap of moldering age  
Thy childless mourner ? Oh, woe worth the while !  
Would now that I might die with thee, my child."  
But, when he stayed his sobbings and laments  
And would have raised his aged body up,  
He, as the ivy by the laurel's boughs,  
By the fine-webbed robes was caught ; and fearful grew  
The struggle. He sought on his knees to rise ;  
She held him back. And if by force he rose  
He tore the aged flesh from off his bones.  
And then at length the evil-fated man  
Ceased and gave up the ghost, able no more  
To cope with that great anguish. And they lie,  
Father and daughter, corpses side by side :  
A sight of sorrow that appeals for tears.  
And truly let thy fortunes be apart  
From reasonings of mine : for thou thyself  
Wilt know a shelter from the retribution.  
But not now first I count the lot of man  
A passing shadow : and I might say those

Of mortals who are very seeming wise  
 And fret themselves with learnings, those are they  
 Who make them guilty of the chiefest folly ;  
 But no one mortal is a happy man,  
 Though, riches flooding in, more prosperous  
 One than another grow ; yet none is happy.

CHORUS.

Fortune, it seems, on Jason will to-day  
 Justly heap many woes. Oh hapless one,  
 Daughter of Creon, how we mourn thy fate,  
 Who to the halls of Hades art gone forth  
 Because of Jason's marrying with thee.

MEDEA.

My friends, this purpose stand approved to me,  
 Slaying my boys to hurry from this realm ;  
 Not, making weak delays, to give my sons  
 By other and more cruel hands to die.  
 Nay, steel thyself, my heart. Why linger we  
 As not to do that horror which yet *must* be ?  
 Come, oh, my woeful hand, take, take the sword  
 On to my new life's mournful starting point,  
 And be no coward, nor think on thy boys,  
 How dear, how thou didst give them birth. Nay, rather  
 For this short day forget they are thy sons :  
 Then weep them afterwards. For though thou slay'st them,  
 Oh, but they're dear, and I a desolate woman.

CHORUS.

*Strophe.*

Earth, and all-lighting glow of sun,  
 Behold ! behold !  
 See this sad woman and undone,  
 Ere yet her murderous hand, made bold  
 Against her own, her children slay.  
 For they sprang of the golden stem  
 Of thy descent ; and great to-day  
 Our dread the blood of gods in them  
 Shall by a mortal's wrath be spilt.  
 But now do thou, Oh, Zeus-born light,  
 Stay her—prevent ; put thou to flight  
 That fell Erinnys to this home  
 From God's avenging past crimes, come  
 To overwhelm her in despair and guilt.

*Antistrophe.*

Upon thy children has thy care  
 Been spent in vain ;  
 In vain thy loved babes didst thou bear ;  
 Thou who the inhospitable lane  
 Of the dark rocks Sympleglades  
 Didst leave behind thee in thy wake.  
 Forlorn one, why do pangs like these  
 Of passion thy torn spirit shake ?  
 Why shall stern murder of them grow ?  
 For scarce is any cleansing found  
 Of kindred blood that from the ground  
 For vengeance cries : but like for like  
 The gods send curses down and strike  
 The slayers and their houses low.



FIRST SON.

Alas !

What shall I do ? Whither run from our mother ?

SECOND SON.

I know not, dearest brother, for we perish.

CHORUS.

Dost hear thy children, hear their cry of pain ?

Oh luckless woman, desperate !

Shall I within the house then ? I were fain

To shield the children from such fate.

FIRST SON.

Ho ! in the gods' name, rescue ! There is need.

SECOND SON.

For we are in the toils, beneath the knife.

CHORUS.

Oh cruel, what, of stone or steel, art thou,

Thou who that bloom,

Of sons thyself didst bear wouldst see die now

By thine hands' doom ?

One woman have I heard of, one alone,

And of the far-off days, whose deathful hand

Was laid upon the babes that were her own,

Ino by gods distraught, when from her land

She by the queenly spouse of Zeus was banned,

Sent to roam to and fro ;

And, seeking her sons' death, she, wild with woe,

Stretched forth her foot from off the sea's rough strand,

Whelmed her with them into the waves below,

And, they so dying with her, died.

Henceforth can aught called strange or dread betide ?

Oh bed of woman, with all mischief fraught,

What ills hast thou ere now to mortals brought !

JASON.

Women, ye who thus stand about the house,

Is she within her home who wrought these crimes,

Medea, or hath she gone away in flight ?

For now must she or hide beneath the earth

Or lift herself with wings into wide air

Not to pay forfeit to the royal house.

Thinks she, having slain the rulers of this land,

Herself uninjured from this home to fly ?

But not of her I reck as of my sons :

Her those she wronged will evilly requite,

But to preserve my children's life I came,

Lest to my hurt the avenging kin on them

Wreak somewhat for their mother's bloody crime.

CHORUS.

Oh, wretched man ! What woes thou com'st to, Jason,

Thou know'st not, else hadst thou not said these words.

JASON.

What is it ? Seeks she then to kill me too ?

CHORUS.

The boys have perished by their mother's hand.

JASON.

Woe! What sayst thou? Woman, how thou destroy'st me!

CHORUS.

And now no more in being count thy sons.

JASON.

Where killed she them, in the house or without?

CHORUS.

Open these gates, thou'lt see thy murdered sons.

JASON.

Undo the bolt on the instant, servants there,  
Loose the clamps, that I may see my grief and bane,  
May see them dead and guerdon her with death.

MEDEA (*from overhead*).

Why dost thou batter at these gates, and force them,  
Seeking the dead and me who wrought their deaths?  
Cease from this toil. If thou hast need of me  
Speak then, if thou wouldst aught. But never more  
Thy hand shall touch me; such a chariot  
The Sun, my father's father, gives to me,  
A stronghold from the hand of enemies.

JASON.

Oh, loathsome thing, oh woman most abhorred  
Of gods and me and all the race of men,  
Thou who hast dared to thrust the sword in thy sons  
Thyself didst bear, and hast destroyed me out,  
Childless. And thou beholdest sun and earth,  
Who didst this, daredst this most accursed deed!  
Perish. Oh, I am wise now, then unwise,  
When from thy home in thy barbarian land  
I brought thee with me to a Hellene house,  
A monstrous bane to the land that nurtured thee;  
And to thy father traitress. Now at me  
Have the gods launched thy retributory fiends,  
Who, slaying first thy brother at the hearth,  
Hiedst thee unto the stately-prowed ship Argo.  
Such thy first deeds: then, married to myself,  
And having borne me children, for a spite  
Of beddings and weddings thou hast slaughtered them.  
There's not a Hellene woman had so dared;  
Above whom I, forsooth, choose thee to wife —  
A now loathed tie and ruinous to me —  
Thee lioness, not woman, of a mood  
Than the Tursenian Scylla more untamed.  
Enough; for not with thousands of rebukes  
Could I wring thee, such is thine hardihood.  
Avaunt, thou guilty shame! child-murderess!  
But mine it is to wail my present fate;  
Who nor of my new spousals shall have gain,  
Nor shall have sons whom I begot and bred,  
To call my living own: for I have lost them.

MEDEA.

I would have largely answered back thy words  
If Zeus the father knew not what from me  
Thou didst receive and in what kind hast done.

And 'twas not for thee, having spurned my love,  
 To lead a merry life, flouting at me,  
 Nor for the princess ; neither was it his  
 Who gave her thee to wed, Creon, unscathed,  
 To cast me out of this his realm. And now,  
 If it is so like thee, call me lioness  
 And Scylla, dweller on Tursenian plains,  
 For as right bade me, I have clutched thy heart.

JASON.

And thou too sufferest, partner in the pangs.

MEDEA.

True, but the pain profits if thou shalt not flout.

JASON.

Oh sons, how foul a mother have ye had !

MEDEA.

Oh boys, how died ye by your father's guilt !

JASON.

Not this right hand of mine slew them, indeed.

MEDEA.

No, but thine outrage and new wedding ties.

JASON.

So for a bed lost thou thoughtst fit to slay them ?

MEDEA.

Dost thou count that a light wrong to a woman ?

JASON.

Aye, to a chaste one : but thou 'rt wholly base.

MEDEA.

They are no more. For this will torture thee.

JASON.

They are, I say—a haunting curse for thee.

MEDEA.

Who first begun the wrong the gods do know.

JASON.

Thy loathly mind they verily do know.

MEDEA.

Thou 'rt hateful : and I'm sick of thy cross talk.

JASON.

And I of thine : but the farewell is easy.

MEDEA.

Well, how ? What shall I do ? I too long for it.

JASON.

Let me then bury and bemoan these dead.

MEDEA.

Never. Since I will bury them with this hand,  
 Bearing them to the sacred grove of Hera,  
 God of the heights, that no one of my foes  
 Shall do despite to them, breaking their graves.  
 And I'll appoint this land of Sisyphus



A solemn high day and a sacrifice  
 For aye, because of their unhallowed deaths,  
 For I go to the city of Erechtheus,  
 To dwell with Ægeus there, Pandion's son,  
 For thee, as is most fit, thou, an ill man,  
 Shalt die an ill death, thy head battered in  
 By the ruins of thine Argo: that, to thee,  
 The sharp last sequel of our wedding tie.

JASON.

But thee may thy children's Erinnys slay  
 And Vengeance for blood.

MEDEA.

And who among gods and friends will hear thee  
 Betrayer of strangers and breaker of oaths?

JASON.

Out, out, stained wretch and child murderess.

MEDEA.

Go now to thy home and bury thy bride.

JASON.

I go. Yea, of both my children bereft.

MEDEA.

Thy wail is yet nothing. Wait and grow old.

JASON.

Oh, sons, much loved!

MEDEA.

Of their mother, not thee.

JASON.

And yet thou didst slay them.

MEDEA.

Making thee woe.

JASON.

Alas! alas! I, a woeful man,  
 Desire to kiss the dear lips of my boys.

MEDEA.

Thou callst on them now, hast welcomes now;  
 Then didst reject them.

JASON.

In the gods' name,  
 Give me to touch my children's soft flesh.

MEDEA.

It may not be: thy words are vain waste.

JASON.

Oh Zeus, dost thou hear how I'm kept at bay,  
 And this that is done unto me of her,  
 This foul and child-slaying lioness?  
 But still to my utmost as best I may  
 I make these death-wails and invokings for them;  
 Thus to my witness calling the gods,  
 How thou, having slain my sons, dost prevent  
 That I touch with my hand and bury the dead —  
 Whom would I had never begotten, so  
 By thee to behold them destroyed.

## CHORUS.

Zeus in Olympus parts out many lots,  
 And the gods work to many undreamed of ends,  
 And that we looked for is never fulfilled,  
 And to things not looked for the gods make a way :  
 Even so hath this issue been.

## V.

The Crowned Hippolytus, like the Medea, has served as an inspiration to the modern stage, although it can scarcely be denied that they both owe part of this long life to the fact that Seneca used them in the preparation of two of his famous plays. That his treatment of the old subjects abounded with gross faults will be seen later; yet their very extravagances, by suiting the raw taste of an unpolished age, led the modern public back to the study of antiquity. His Phædra was probably taken from some other original than this Crowned Hippolytus, for Phædra was the heroine of other plays than this. One of them, the work of Euripides, was known as the Veiled Hippolytus, from the fact that the hero hid his head in shame when his stepmother confessed her love for him. The Crowned Hippolytus was so called from the fact that the hero appeared, bearing a crown to offer to Artemis. While the earlier play was a failure, this revision was a great success. It was brought out in 428 B.C., winning for its author the first prize. The scene of the play is Trazene, where Hippolytus, the son of Theseus, had been brought up. The prologue, after the awkward fashion which was not employed in the Medea, announces with the dryness of a playbill the action of the play: Phædra, the stepmother of Hippolytus, is cursed by Aphrodite with love of that young hero. He is represented a charming youth, fond of hunting and of the country; and a devoted worshipper of Artemis. Indeed, while the gods stand above the scene and create confusion for men and women, in this instance bringing about the death of Hippolytus on account of Aphrodite's jealousy of Artemis, yet even here the action rests on human deeds and emotions. Thus Hippolytus is drawn in a most natural way. His love for the country is beautifully given, as these lines will show :

" Welcome to me, O fairest  
 Artemis, loveliest maiden  
 Of them that walk on Olympus !

I bring for thee a plaited wreath of flowers  
 From meadow lands untrodden and unmown.  
 There never shepherd dares to feed his flocks,  
 Nor iron comes therein ; only the bee  
 Through that unsullied meadow in the spring  
 Flies on and leaves it pure, and Reverence  
 Freshens with rivers' dew the tended flowers.



ARTEMIS, THE GODDESS OF THE CHASE.  
(Statue in the Louvre.)



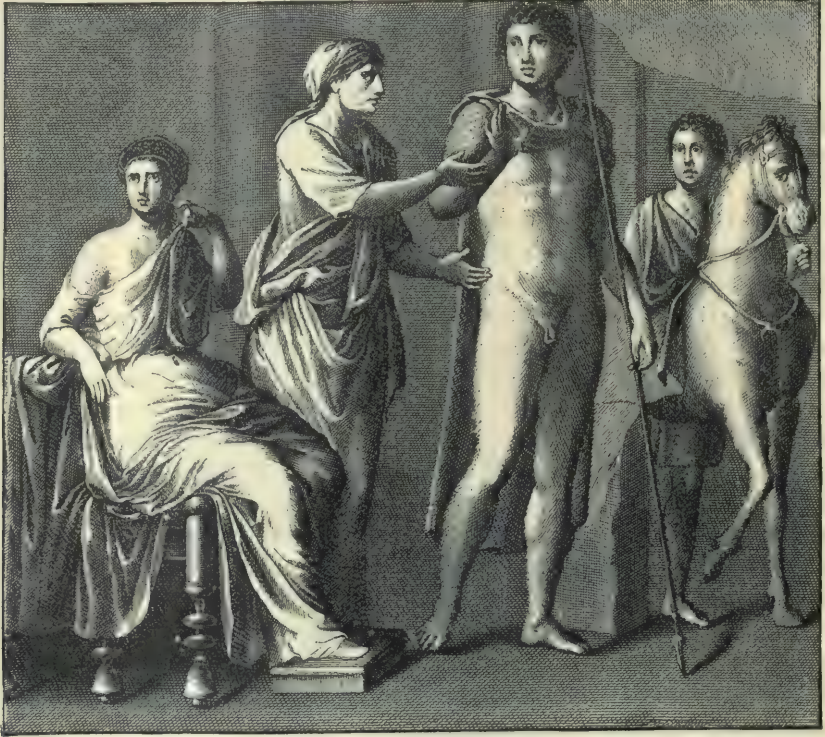
And only they whose virtue is untaught,  
 They that inherit purity, may pluck  
 Their bloom and gather it — no baser man.  
 Yet, O dear mistress, from this pious hand  
 Take thou a garland for thy golden hair.  
 For I, of all men, only am thy friend  
 To share thy converse and companionship,  
 Hearing thy voice, whose eyes I never see —  
 And thus may I live until I reach the goal !”

Yet even here we may detect the self-satisfaction which leads Hippolytus to his fate. The last lines express his consciousness of his superiority, and it is with great tact that Euripides lets his hero display the fanaticism by which alone the Greeks could explain his detestation of Aphrodite. When Phædra appears, it is to find the spectators understanding that she is under the ban of some offended deity. Still this divine interference is swiftly reconciled with the facts of life. The nurse who brings Phædra out upon the stage is as far as possible removed from a solemn agent of offended deities. She is rather a remote ancestress of Mrs. Gamp, with her selfish, complaining, and familiar advice. Here are her first words :

“Alas! the miseries of mankind and their odious diseases! What must I do for you, and what not do? Here you have light and air, and the couch on which you are lying sick has been moved out of doors, for you were forever talking about coming out; but soon you will be in a hurry to go back to your room, for you are very fickle and nothing contents you. What is present gives you no pleasure; what you lack, you fancy more agreeable. Tending the sick is worse than being sick — one is a simple evil; the other combines mental distress and hard work.” Of course, in the measures of the original, these words lacked the flippancy which they acquire in prose, for the unity of composition in a tragedy which had acquired its form under the solemn inspiration of the deepest religious sentiment compelled that all such living flavors should adopt a majestic expression; yet, in spite of this cloak, the familiarity of the nurse's speech must have been distinctly perceptible to the spectators. When Phædra begins to utter her distracted lament, the nurse repeats her commonplace consolation, and seeks the cause of her misery, and almost always with the same vulgar curiosity. This quality stands in marked contrast with Phædra's despair. When her secret becomes known, she beseeches her unworthy confidant not to tell it. The nurse, however, is brutal in her frankness :

“Why do you talk in this fine strain! You need not choice words, but the man.” And out of her own head, having promised to arrange matters honorably, she tells Hippolytus that Phædra loves him. The Chorus hear his wrathful utterances at being told this, and in a moment

he bursts in full of fury and giving expression to his hatred of women. Phædra, overcome by remorse, hangs herself, and when her husband, Theseus, returns he finds in her lifeless hand a letter in which she has accused him of pursuing her with unholy love. In his grief and anger Theseus bitterly denounces his son and orders him into exile. Hippolytus is bound to secrecy by an oath to the nurse and departs in his chariot. The horses carry him to the seashore, and there he is beaten against the rocks by the sea. When he is brought back dying,



THE NURSE DISCLOSES TO HIPPOLYTUS THE LOVE OF HIS STEPMOTHER PHÆDRA.  
(*Wall Painting—Herculaneum.*)

Artemis appears and explains the ruin that Aphrodite has wrought. Theseus is broken-hearted ; he says :

“ Oh, son, forsake me not for death. Take heart.”

To which Hippolytus makes answer :

“ I have done with taking heart, father. I die !  
Cover my face, and swiftly, with the robe.”

The position that the gods hold, of superior and wilful interrupters of public and private peace, is not an exalted one. They possess no



quality of lofty rule. The etiquette of Olympus forbids that Artemis should intervene to protect this ill-starred family from the wrath of Aphrodite. They exist only as conventional dramatic characters, who inspire other feelings than reverence. There is, indeed, a clashing between their interference and the natural conduct of the play, but they were as essential a part of the Greek stage as were the chorus and the measures of the lines.

The songs of the chorus are often beautiful, as in this passage :

“ O Love ! O Love ! from the eyes of thee  
 Droppeth desire, and into the soul  
 That thou conquerest ledest thou sweetness and charm ;  
 Come not to me bringing sorrow or harm,  
 And come not in dole,  
 Nor with measureless passion o’ermaster thou me !  
 For neither the lightning fire  
 Nor the bolts of the stars are dire  
 As the dart hurled forth from the hand of Love,  
 The son of God above.  
 For vainly, vainly, and all in vain,  
 Pile we to Phœbus the Pythian shrines ;  
 Vainly by Alpheus heap victims on high ;  
 Vain indeed are the prayers we cry,  
 If no prayer divines  
 That Love is the tyrant and master of men.  
 Through every fate he errs,  
 The keeper of bride chambers,  
 Nor alike unto all, nor one only way,  
 He comes to spoil and slay.”

It is impossible not to notice the tendency of the lyrical parts of the plays to become graceful ornaments rather than coherent parts of the construction. In modern times the growth of the opera after the decay of tragedy is perhaps a similar change. The end of the play is given in these lines :

HIPPOLYTUS.

O miserable mother ! Hateful birth !  
 May none I love spring from a lawless bond !

THESEUS.

Will ye not drag him hence, slaves ? Were ye deaf  
 When long ago I spoke his exile out ?

HIPPOLYTUS.

Yet at his peril that lays hands on me.  
 Thysel, if so thou wilt, shalt thrust me forth.

THESEUS.

That will I, if thou art fixed to disobey ;  
 No grief comes o’er my heart that thou must go.

HIPPOLYTUS.

’Tis settled, as it seems. Alas ! alas !  
 For what I know, I know not how to tell.  
 O thou, Latona’s daughter, dear to me



Above the rest of heaven, in the hunt  
 Companion, whom I took sweet counsel with !  
 O Artemis ! I must be banished now,  
 From glorious Athens. But farewell, farewell,  
 O city, and farewell, Erectheus' land.  
 O plain of Troezen, what delights are thine  
 To spend a happy youth in ! but farewell.  
 For the last time behold I thee, that hearest  
 For the last time my voice. Come, speak to me,  
 Youths of my age and country ; send me hence  
 With a kind word at parting ; for indeed  
 You shall not look upon a purer man,  
 Though thus I show not in my father's thoughts.

## CHORUS.

Greatly the care of the gods, when I think on it, lessens my grieving,  
 But hide I a hope in the heart's depths of comprehending it then.  
 I am utterly left at fault, in beholding the works and perceiving  
 The fortunes of mortals ; for aimlessly change  
 In a shifting confusion the lives of men,  
 Far-wandering ever to range.

Oh, would that Fate from the heavens would answer my calling upon her,  
 Granting me joy with my lot and a spirit unsullied in pain,  
 A judgment not strained too high, neither basely entamped with dishonor ;  
 For, easily changing the want of my ways  
 To the need of the morrow, in peace would I fain  
 Be happy the length of my days.

But dim and amazed is my mind, the unlooked-for I see come to pass ;  
 For, ah me ! I behold, I behold  
 The clearliest burning star  
 Of Hellas cast out by a father, alas !  
 In his anger, to exile afar !  
 O ye sands of the neighboring shores, where the water  
 Breaks into foam ! Forest oaks spreading wide  
 Where with swift-footed hounds he would rush on the slaughter,  
 With Artemis aye at his side !

The yoke of Henetian foals in the car o'er the Limnan plain  
 He shall urge never more, never more,  
 The steeds held back by his foot ;  
 And the song that was sleepless shall silent remain,  
 In his home, 'neath the chords of the lute.  
 And crownless, Dictynna, the glade is thou hauntest  
 Deep in the forest, ungarlanded, lone.  
 Hushed is the strife for his hand, and the contest  
 Of maidens in marriage, for, lo ! he is gone.

*Epode.* But thy sorrows the soul in me sadden ;  
 And fatal the fate is I undergo  
 In tears for thy sake and in pain.  
 Thy son, O mother, is born in vain !  
     Woe ! Woe !  
 Against the gods I madden !  
 O graces ! O goddesses linked in one !  
 Why must the innocent exile go  
 Cast out from the halls of his father, and forth from his kingdom thrown ?  
 But lo ! of this man's followers I behold  
 One reach the house with sorrow in his face.

## SECOND MESSENGER.

Turning my steps what way shall I o'ertake  
The King? Speak, ladies, is he in the halls?

## CHORUS.

Behold, he comes from out his palaces.

## MESSENGER.

Theseus, I bear a history worth a thought  
To thee, to all Athenian citizens,  
And these that dwell in Troezen it regards.

## THESEUS.

Speak: is it any great calamity  
That falls upon the neighboring twain of states?

## MESSENGER.

The word is this: Hippolytus is no more,  
Though yet for a scale's turn looks he on the light.

## THESEUS.

Killed? And who slew him? Met him any man  
In hate, whose wife he, as his father's, wronged?

## MESSENGER.

His horses and his chariot were his death;  
These, and the curses of thy mouth implored  
Of him that is thy sire and rules the seas.

## THESEUS.

O great Poseidon, how truly art my father  
That thus mine imprecation hast fulfilled!  
How did he perish? Speak: how did he die?  
How did the snares of justice close him in?

## MESSENGER.

We servants, standing by the wave-met beach,  
Curried the horses weeping, since there came  
To us a messenger, who said, "No more  
Hippolytus shall set returning feet  
Upon our earth, being banished by the King."  
We wept; and then himself approached and brought  
The same sad strain of tears. Close at his heels  
The myriad of his friends and fellow-youth  
Followed in thronging companies. At last  
He spoke, forsaking groaning: "O my soul,  
Why art thou thus disquieted in me?  
My father's law must come to pass. O slaves,  
Yoke now the harnessed horses to the car.  
For me this city is no more!" And then,  
Truly, each man was eager to obey.  
Swifter than speech we drew the horses up  
Caparisoned to his side. He seized the reins  
In both his hands from off the chariot-rail,  
Mounting all buskined as he was. But first  
He spoke to God with outstretched palms: "O Zeus,  
Let me not live if I be born so vile,  
And show my father, when I am dead least,  
If not while yet I look upon the light,  
How much he hath misused me!" With the word  
He spurred at once both horses on, and we  
Ran by the reins, and followed him along  
The forthright Argive, Epidaurian way;

But as we brought into the desert place  
 Our convoy — where there is a certain shore  
 Beyond this country, sloping to the sea  
 Saronic — thence arose a fearful voice  
 We shuddered at to hear, so loud it boomed  
 Like rumbling thunders of the nether Zeus.  
 The steeds, with stiffened heads and ears pricked up,  
 Listened, and on us crept a vehement fear  
 Of whence the voice might come; but, looking out  
 Towards the shore that roared with waves, we saw  
 A huge, unnatural billow, whose crest was fast  
 In heaven, that took away the coasting rocks  
 Of Sciron from our sight, and Isthmus hid,  
 And Aesculapius' cliff. Then swelling high,  
 Dashing much foam about in the sea's swirl,  
 It neared the strand and towards the chariot moved.  
 But as the breaker and flood of the huge third wave  
 Burst on the beach, that billow sent us out  
 A portent, ay, a fierce and monstrous bull;  
 And all the country, filled with its uproar,  
 Voiced back the appalling sounds to us, whose eyes  
 Refused to look upon our visible fear.  
 Then on the horses came a mighty dread;  
 But he who mastered them, knowing well the ways  
 And nature of the steed, seized on the reins,  
 Pulling them as a sailor pulls the oar,  
 Tightening the trace with stress of the backward thrown  
 Body. But in their teeth the horses strained  
 The bit, nor heeded urging from behind  
 Of steering hand, nor rein, nor wheel. For when  
 Our master drove them towards the softer ground  
 The monster came in front to turn them back,  
 Maddening the team with fright; but towards the rocks  
 Bore them their furious mettle, still so far  
 He silently kept coming close behind,  
 Until the chariot fell; the horses reared  
 And threw their driver out; against the crags  
 The fellow o' the wheel was dashed, and forth there flew  
 The linch-pins and the axle-boxes up.  
 All was confusion then. But he, alas!  
 Hippolytus, all tangled in the reins,  
 Bound with indissoluble bonds, was dragged  
 Along, his dear head dashed against the rocks,  
 His body shattered; and he cried aloud  
 Most horribly, "Ye whom my mangers fed!  
 O my own horses! stop; nor blot me out  
 Utterly from the world! O fatal curse!"  
 Ah! who will save a man most innocent?"  
 But, fain at heart to help, our laggard feet  
 Still left us far behind; yet from the reins  
 At last, I know not how, he loosed himself  
 And fell, nor long his breath of life endures.  
 With that the horses vanished, and no more  
 We saw the monster in that craggy place.  
 King, in thy palaces a slave from birth  
 Am I, yet will I not be made to think  
 That he, thy son, is evil. Let the race  
 Of women all go hang and fill the pines  
 Of Ida with their writing. He is pure.



CHORUS.

Now of new ills the grief is consummate.  
Fate and necessity may no man flee.

THESEUS.

Through hatred of this man thy tale of woe  
Rejoiced me at the first ; but since the gods  
I fear, and since he was my son, no more  
Delight nor sorrow moves me for his pain.

MESSENGER.

But how to please thee then ? Must we convey  
His body here ? How use this anguished man ?  
Consider ; but if I might counsel thee,  
Thou wert not savage to a suffering son.

THESEUS.

Go, bear him hither. Let mine eyes behold  
Him that denied his guilt ; for I with words  
And Heaven's judgment will confute him now.

CHORUS.

Thou the unbending mind of the gods and of earthly ones bendest,  
Cypris, and where thou wendest  
He whose feathers are bright with a myriad changing dyes  
On nimblest pinion flies ;  
Over the earth and above the brine of the sounding sea  
Hovering flutters he.  
For Love with maddened heart enchants  
Whatever meets his glittering wings—  
The wild beast whelps in mountain haunts,  
The creatures in the waves,  
And on the earth the growing things  
That burning Helios looks to see,  
And man ; but these are all thy slaves,  
And subject, O Cypris, to thee.

ARTEMIS.

Oh, sprung from a noble father, O son  
Of Aegeus, thee bid I hear.  
For I am the maid of Latona that speak !  
Theseus, unhappiest, wherefore to thee  
Is bloodshed and pain a delight ?  
For unjustly thy son is destroyed with the curse  
Of thee, an unnatural sire.  
For thy trust was put in the falsehood of Phaedra  
Regarding uncertain invisible things,  
But sure is thy ruin and plain.  
Oh, how dost not hide out of sight in the nethermost  
Chasm of torment and darkness in hell,  
Thy body, defiled as thou art ?  
Or why dost not take to thee wings and escape  
To a changèd existence above,  
Withdrawing thy foot from the snare of these ills  
That here hast no lot with the good ?

\* \* \* \* \*

But hearken, Theseus, how thine evils stand,  
For, though it vantage nought, I will torment thee ;  
But to this end I came, to manifest  
The just mind of thy son, that he may die  
In honour, and of Phaedra's agonized love,

That yet was, in some sort, a nobleness  
 To witness. For that goddess most abhorred  
 By us, whose pleasure is the virgin life,  
 Goaded her on to passion for thy child.  
 But while she strove to gain the victory  
 Over desire by right, against her will  
 The scheming nurse destroyed her, that betrayed  
 Her secret to thy son, binding with oaths.  
 He, as was just, would not obey nor hear  
 Her words, nor yet, for all thy calumny,  
 Took aught of obligation from his oath,  
 Having an honourable nature. Then  
 Thy wife, afraid a test might show her shame,  
 Graved the false tablet that destroyed thy son  
 With subtle guiles, and yet persuaded thee.

THESEUS.

Woe's me !

ARTEMIS.

O Theseus, stings the speech? Be still,  
 That, all being heard, thou then mayest groan the more.  
 Dost not remember how thy father gave thee  
 Three curses, sure to slay? O sinful man,  
 One sent no foe destruction, but thy son!  
 The sea-god justly gave thee what was due  
 According to his vow, but in my sight  
 And his most base thou showest, for that thou  
 Proof nor the voice of prophets didst not wait,  
 And soughtest not inquiry, and no time  
 Didst brood the thought, but swiftness than was well  
 Vented a curse against thy son, and slew him.

THESEUS.

O mistress, let me die !

ARTEMIS.

Mighty and dread  
 Thy deeds; and yet forgiveness may befall  
 To even such. For Cypris willed these things  
 To satisfy her heart. So runs the law  
 For gods : what wills desiring deity  
 No fellow-god would thwart, each stands aloof  
 From crossing other's purpose evermore.  
 Be sure that, stood I not in dread of Zeus,  
 I never would have come to such dishonour  
 As leave to die the man more dear to me  
 Than all the world beside. As for thy sin,  
 The guilt is loosed because thou didst not know,  
 Since in her death thy wife destroyed the proof  
 Of questions, and through this beguiled thy mind.  
 Now most upon thy head this storm is burst,  
 But me, me too, it strikes. For at the death  
 Of pious mortals gods do not rejoice,  
 That crush the wicked and destroy their race.

CHORUS.

Ah ! look where he cometh, a dying man,  
 With tender body and auburn head  
 Mangled and cruelly rent.  
 Woe to the palaces, woe ! for a ban

Of double sorrow and twofold dread  
Upon us from heaven is sent.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Ah, ah! I suffer! I die!  
Alas, me unhappy! For thus was I torn  
By the unjust answer of God  
To the curse of a father unjust!  
And spasms of anguish, ah! beat in my brain,  
Swift agonies shoot through my head.  
Ah! stop, for I faint; let me rest.  
O team of my chariot, fed at my hand!  
It is you that destroyed me, and you are my death,  
O hateful and terrible steeds!  
Alas, me! I pray you by Heaven, O slaves,  
Touch ye the wounds of my mangled flesh  
With tender and quiet hands.  
O Zeus, dost behold? for the servant of God,  
I that am holy and chaste,  
Go down to a manifest hell under earth,  
Life unto me being lost;  
And the work of goodness I wrought to mankind  
Is fruitless indeed, and as labour in vain.  
Alas! alas!  
For the anguish, the anguish is come on me now.  
Let me alone, slaves. Wilt thou not come,  
O healer, Death?  
Destroy me, destroy me! I long for the sword  
Keen with a double edge,  
To cleave me asunder, to cut me in twain  
And put my life to sleep.  
O curse! the sins of my forefathers now,  
The blood-guilt of my kin,  
Are burst from the bounds, nor delay on the course,  
But upon me — O wherefore? — are come  
That am nowise the cause of the wrong.  
Ah! what shall I say?  
How set me free  
From living and suffering pain?  
O black necessity, gate of night!  
O Death, wouldst thou hush me to rest!

ARTEMIS.

O sufferer, truly art thou yoked with grief,  
Yet by thy nobleness of soul destroyed.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Ah! ah!  
O heavenly breath of fragrance, thee I feel  
Even in torment, and the pain is passed.  
The goddess Artemis is standing by.

ARTEMIS.

She is, O sufferer, she, thy friend in heaven.

HIPPOLYTUS.

And dost thou, mistress, look upon my woes?

ARTEMIS.

Yet dare not shed the god-unlawful tear.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Thy huntsman and thy follower is no more.



ARTEMIS.

No more, no more, yet dear to me in death.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Gone is thy horseman, guarder of thy shrines.

ARTEMIS.

Ay, for unscrupulous Cypris schemed the plan.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Alas ! I know what god destroys me now.

ARTEMIS.

Thou, being chaste, wert odious to her fame.

HIPPOLYTUS.

One Cypris, as it seems, destroys us three.

ARTEMIS.

Thy father, thee, and — for the third — his wife.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Wherefore I also mourn my father's fate.

ARTEMIS.

The goddess blinded him with her deceits,

HIPPOLYTUS.

Father, how art thou wretched in this grief !

THESEUS.

I perish, son ; I have no joy in life.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Such bitter gifts thy sire the sea-god granted !

THESEUS.

Would that the prayer had died within my throat !

HIPPOLYTUS.

But why ? Thou wouldst have slain me in thy rage.

THESEUS.

For Heaven willed my judgment's overthrow.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Ah ! were man's curse on Heaven but as strong !

ARTEMIS.

Hush ! for not even in the shadowy world  
 Hereunder shall the shafts of Cypris' rage  
 Be hurled against thy body unrevenged,  
 Because thy holiness was not in vain,  
 Nor vain thy lofty thought ; but whoso breathes  
 Most dear to her shall fall, by might of these  
 Inevitable arrows of my hand,  
 Slaughtered in vengeance for thy death. But thou  
 Shall have immortal recompense for pain.  
 Great are the honours I will give thee here  
 In this Troezenian city, and for thee  
 Unmarried girls before their wedding day  
 Shall shear their yellow tresses ; thou shalt reap  
 For many an age the harvest of their tears,  
 And evermore thy memory shall remain,  
 And make a music in their maiden mouths  
 For ever, nor shall silence hold unsaid  
 The love that Phaedra bore thee. But, O king,

O son of Aegeus, take within thine arms  
 Thy child and clasp him to thee, since I know  
 Thou didst not willingly visit him with death,  
 And it is natural that men should err  
 When so the immortals order. And forgive  
 Thy sire, Hippolytus. Thy death was fate,  
 And this thou knowest. But farewell, farewell;  
 I may not look upon thy life's decay,  
 The dying gasps of men were my pollution;  
 And no more distant I behold thine end.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Farewell even thou, blest virgin, and depart.  
 But lightly a long friendship dost thou leave.  
 Yet for thy sake I loose from all reproach  
 My father; for indeed since long ago  
 Thy words have been my rule of life. Ah, me!  
 The air grows black before my sight already.  
 Father, take me, lift me, lift me up.

THESEUS.

Thy blessing, son; how dost thou wring my heart.

HIPPOLYTUS.

I die; and see indeed the gates of hell.

THESEUS.

And wilt thou leave my soul defiled with blood?

HIPPOLYTUS.

No, from this guilt and bloodshed thou art freed.

THESEUS.

How sayest thou, my soul is loosed from sin?

HIPPOLYTUS.

Artemis, witness, wielder of the bow.

THESEUS.

O best beloved, how noble art thou shown!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Farewell thou also; take my last farewell.

THESEUS.

Woe's me, to lose a son so dear and brave!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Pray that thy lawful sons may prove as much.

THESEUS.

O son, forsake me not for death. Take heart.

HIPPOLYTUS.

I have done with taking heart, father. I die;

Cover my face and swiftly with the robe.

THESEUS.

O Athens' famous frontiers, Pallas' earth,  
 How shall ye mourn this man! Alas! alas!  
 Cypris, of thy revenge how many things  
 Shall keep the memory present in my breast!

CHORUS.

Common this sorrow to all in the city  
 Comes, an unlooked-for guest,  
 Of many the tears shall gush out in their pity,  
 And many shall beat the breast.  
 For the grief of the great there are many to wail,  
 And long shall the fame of their sorrow prevail.

## CHAPTER V.—EURIPIDES II.—*Continued.*

I.—The *Alcestis* of Euripides—His Humanity Offensive to his Contemporaries—The Andromache; the Conversational Duels. II.—The *Suppliants*; The *Heracleidæ*; Their Political Allusions—The Helen, with its Romantic Interest in Place of the Earlier Solemnity, and its Enforcement of Unheroic Misfortune—Its Lack of the Modern Dramatic Spirit. III.—The *Troades*, a Curious Treatment of the Old Myths—The Mad Heracles; its Representation of the Gods in Accordance with the New Spirit—The *Electra*; its Importance as a Bit of Literary Controversy—Its Inferiority to the Plays of Æschylus and Sophocles on the Same Subject—The *Ion*; a Drama, not a Tragedy, and a Marked Specimen of the Change in Thought—A Comparison between its Complexity and the Earlier Simplicity—Condemnation of the Old Mythology. IV.—The Two *Iphigeneias*—The *deus ex machina*. V.—The *Bacchæ*, and its Importance in the Study of Greek Religious Thought—The Feeling of Euripides for Natural Scenery; his Modern Spirit—The Satyric Play, the *Cyclops*—The *Rhesus*. VI. The Successors of Euripides—The Extended Influence of the Greek Drama, and Especially of Euripides as the Most Modern of the Ancients.

### I.

THE *Alcestis* is the earliest play of Euripides that has come down to us, it having been brought out in 438 B.C. Only comparatively recently has it been discovered that it was the fourth play of a tetralogy which secured the second prize, the first falling to Sophocles; and the fact of its thus standing at the end of a series of four explains much that would otherwise continue to embarrass critics, for it evidently possessed some of the qualities of the final satyric piece, with its semi-comic lines and its happy ending. Possibly this combination of tragedy and comedy was a novel invention of this author, and it was certainly one that has borne rich fruit in later times.

The play represents the self-sacrifice of *Alcestis*, the wife of *Admetus*. *Admetus* had angered *Artemis* by his marriage, and thus been doomed to die, but *Apollo*, who had served him and found him a kind master, succeeded in persuading the goddesses of fate to accept a substitute, if any of his family could be induced to die in his stead. Neither his father nor mother, however, was willing to perish for him, but *Alcestis*, his loving wife, consents.

Those who have seen in Euripides a mere despiser of women have shown a lofty disregard for a good part of the evidence from which to form a judgment, for he drew good as well as evil women, as this play shows, and moralists have asserted that



they have seen both kinds in life. In the *Hecuba* the chorus of women asserts that some women are envied for their virtues, while others may be classed among bad things. Doubtless what most troubled the contemporaries of Euripides was simply the fact that he drew women as they were, good or bad, instead of more or less abstract embodiments of heroic passions such as we find in the work of his predecessors. It was the humanity of Euripides that offended his conservative contemporaries; they felt for his changes the same repugnance that many people now feel for novels about heroes and heroines who have no heroic qualities, who are like people across



THE DOOM OF ADMETUS. (*Wall Painting—Herculaneum.*)

the street and totally devoid of the impossible incrustation of faultless beauty, unfailing enthusiasm, and every human virtue. Such critics demand something greater and, as they think, finer than life can furnish, and the opposition to Euripides was due to a similar feeling.

It is not easy to see, however, what heroism is greater than that which Alcestis here displays: a queen, a mother, a wife, loving and loved, she abandons every thing that makes life sweet from pure unselfishness. And with what art Euripides portrays the bitterness of her sacrifice! A slave comes forth in tears and describes her mistress's farewell to the home where she had been so happy.



ALCESTIS, HAVING OFFERED HER LIFE TO SAVE HER HUSBAND'S, BIDS FAREWELL TO HER FAMILY.

"As soon as Alcestis perceived that the fatal moment was drawing nigh, she bathed her fair body in the pure water of the stream, and arrayed herself in the rich robes that she took from the cedar chests, and then turning to the hearth, she prayed to the protecting deity: 'O sovereign goddess! now that I am ready to descend to the shades, I lay myself at your feet for the last time. Be a mother to my children. Grant to the boy a loving wife, to the girl a worthy husband. Let them not die, like their mother, an untimely death, but let them, happier than she, live out the full measure of their days in their native land.'" The slave goes on to recount the sad parting of Alcestis with her own room. "Meanwhile her children kept clutching her dress and weeping; she took them in her arms, kissing them in turn, as about to die. All the slaves were wandering here and there in the palace, lamenting the fate of their mistress; she offered her hand to every one, and there was none so poor to whom she did not speak and bid farewell."

This last is a touch of pathos that with all the rest brings down the scene from fairyland to every-day life after a fashion that can not



be said to mar it. This piteous bit of kindness simply shows us the woman in all her thoughtful gentleness, and can art do more than that? The same effect is produced when Alcestis herself appears upon the stage, and controls herself for parting from her husband, a passage that is thus rendered by Browning in his "Balaustion's Adventure":

"Admetos,—how things go with me thou seest,—  
 I wish to tell thee, ere I die, what things  
 I will should follow. I — to honor thee,  
 Secure for thee, by my own soul's exchange,  
 Continued looking on the daylight here —  
 Die for thee — yet, if so I pleased, might live.  
 Nay, wed what man of Thessaly I would,  
 And dwell i' the dome with pomp and queenliness.  
 I would not,— would not live bereft of thee,  
 With children orphaned, neither shrank at all,  
 Though having gifts of youth wherein I joyed.  
 Yet, who begot thee and who gave thee birth,  
 Both of these gave thee up; for all, a term  
 Of life was reached when death became them well,  
 Ay, well — to save their child and glorious die:  
 Since thou wast all they had, nor hope remained  
 Of having other children in thy place.  
 So, I and thou had lived out our full time,  
 Nor thou, left lonely of thy wife, wouldst groan  
 With children reared in orphanage: but thus  
 Some god disposed things, willed they so should be.  
 Be they so! Now do thou remember this,  
 Do me in turn a favor, — favor, since  
 Certainly I shall never claim my due,  
 For nothing is more precious than a life:  
 But a fit favor, as thyself wilt say,  
 Loving our children here no less than I,  
 If head and heart be sound in thee at least.  
 Uphold them, make them masters of my house,  
 Nor wed and give a step-dame to the pair,  
 Who, being a worse wife than I, thro' spite  
 Will raise her hand against both thine and mine.  
 Never do this at least, I pray to thee!  
 For hostile the new-comer, the step-dame,  
 To the old brood — a very viper she  
 For gentleness! Here stand they, boy and girl;  
 The boy has got a father, a defense  
 Tower-like he speaks to and has answer from:  
 But thou, my girl, how will thy virginhood  
 Conclude itself in marriage fittingly?  
 Upon what sort of sire-found yoke-fellow  
 Art thou to chance? with all to apprehend —  
 Lest, casting on thee some unkind report,  
 She blast thy nuptials in the bloom of youth.  
 For neither shall thy mother watch thee wed,  
 Nor hearten thee in childbirth, standing by  
 Just when a mother's presence helps thee most!  
 No, for I have to die: and this my ill  
 Comes to me, nor to-morrow, no, nor yet  
 The third day of the month, but now, even now,  
 I shall be reckoned among those no more.  
 Farewell, be happy! And to thee, indeed,



Husband, the boast remains permissible  
 Thou hadst a wife was worthy! and to you,  
 Children, as good a mother gave you birth."

The touches which appeal to every mother's heart are those that Euripides introduced into the tragedy, borrowing his language, as Aristotle has said in speaking of the changes that he wrought, from common life and every-day talk. It was not a mere coincidence that at the same time Socrates was bringing down philosophy from the heavens to live among men.

Then follows the pathetic parting between Alcestis and her family, and the mourning of the chorus. Therewith ends the first part of the tragedy. The second part begins with the entrance of Heracles, who finds Admetus upbraiding his father for his reluctance to die when so few years could be left for him at the best. The god, when he finds in what trouble the family is, goes down to the lower regions and brings back the veiled Alcestis, whom he intrusts to the care of Admetus, pretending that she is a prize he has just won at wrestling. Gradually Admetus discovers the true state of affairs, and all ends well with the reunited family. The happy termination thus made, the play was well suited to take the place of the extravagant jollity of the customary satyric play. It had an adverse effect, however, in cutting it out from the list of tragedies, which was taken to mean those plays that ended sadly. If we do not accept that definition, we need not accept the exclusion, but, whatever it is called, the play contains pathos and gloom enough to earn the name. The latter part relieves it; but certainly makes no one forget the qualities just described.

The *Andromache* is not one of the most striking of the plays of Euripides. It describes the sufferings of the heroine after the fall of Troy, when, in the division of spoils, she falls to the lot of Neoptolemus, who was already married to Hermione. Hermione was childless, and jealous of Andromache and the son she had borne to her new husband. In the absence of Neoptolemus, who had gone to consult the Delphian oracle, the unhappy Trojan woman is exposed to the ill-treatment of her rival, who accuses her of employing unholy arts to prevent her bearing a child. Hermione, in her wrath, wishes to take vengeance on Andromache and her son, Molottus, with the aid of her father, Menelaus, but Peleus interferes, and Menelaus withdraws, leaving Hermione in despair. Then Orestes arrives; he had been in old times a lover of Hermione, and he now claims her hand, which she grants him on receiving his assurances that he will dispose of her husband. This was not an idle assertion, for the messenger appears to announce the violent death of Neoptolemus. Peleus mourns this turn of events, but Thetis consoles him by promising him immor-

tality and bids Andromache and her son to be sent to the Molonian land.

Obviously it would be a carping critic who should complain that this play lacked incident. Indeed, it shows very clearly how far Euripides broke the old rules of tragedy, and instead of uniting with a single aim, to bring out one great emotion, accumulated incoherent actions that should give him continual opportunities for the development of novel and unexpected turns of passion. It was these that tempted him; it was heart-wringing incidents that he cared for, so far as they presented occasion for subtle argument and disquisition. The old narrative and lyrical forms of tragedy faded away before the disputative, which was full of reproach, appeal, and denunciation. This quality had, to be sure, always existed in the earlier plays, but he developed it abundantly, sacrificing the unity of the tragedy to the perpetual excitement of the emotions. His plays became intellectual and passionate duels; the incidents being mere pretexts for eloquence. The *Andromache*, though not impressive by reason of its discordant composition, is yet full of tender and striking touches. It has another interest to the student in the fact that it contains many political allusions, and that Sparta is frequently spoken of with great bitterness. Hence the conclusion is formed that it was written during one of the truces in the Peloponnesian war. The play was composed for the Argive stage, and here any abuse of Sparta was very welcome.

## II.

The *Suppliants*, which was brought out in 420, not only contains incidental political references, but is throughout a sort of political pamphlet in which Athens is praised and the gratitude of Argos is invoked. The ancients themselves called the play an encomium of Athens, and with good reason, for it referred to a part of its mythological past that its orators never let be forgotten. The *Seven against Thebes*, it will be remembered, ended with the denial of the rites of burial to the heroes who had fallen in their attack upon the city. This play opens with the appearance of Adrastus and the mothers of the heroes as suppliants for the interference of the Athenians. Aethra, the mother of Theseus, interests herself in their success, and summons her son to listen to them. His sympathy is soon won, and he is preparing to send a messenger to Thebes, when a herald from that city appears, who demands that the suppliants be at once expelled from Attica. This at once arouses Theseus, and he declares war against Thebes, and soon a messenger arrives with tidings of his victory. Theseus returns with the corpses of the Argive leaders, who are buried at



Eleusis. This simple plot is further employed to carry an earnest defense of democracy, and the action is complicated by romantic details, yet these are no less prominent than elsewhere in the work of Euripides, and in parts one may feel a breath of the old Æschylean simplicity. Yet this impression is at the best only momentary.



HERCULES—TORSO (Belvidere.)  
(Work of Apollonius of Athens. Example of the sculpture of the Attic Renaissance.)

Very similar in construction is the *Heraclidæ*, which was written probably at about the same time as the *Suppliants*, and with a similar intent of praising Athens. This time, however, the Argives came in for denunciation, and the poet spoke out plainly the old hostility be-



tween Attica and the Peloponnesus. According to the old tradition, the sons of Heracles came to Athens, after being driven out from every other part of Greece, and sought protection at the altars of the gods. When Erystheus, the King of Argos, demanded their expulsion and tried to have them removed, the Athenian king Demophoon forbade it, although the Argive herald threatened war. The oracles promised victory to the Athenian king if he would sacrifice to Persephone a noble Athenian virgin. This filled his heart with heaviness, but Macaria, one of the daughters of Heracles, offered herself as a victim, so that the Athenians went out to battle full of confidence, and were victorious over the Argives, whose king they made captive. Undoubtedly the dimly-veiled political lessons that were conveyed to the contemporaries of Euripides by this representation of the legendary hostility between the two great geographical divisions of Greece outweighed the literary merits of this play. The passage in which Macaria offers herself for sacrifice is a bit of pathos such as Euripides was fond of employing, but even this is left incomplete, although, of course, the text may have come down to us in a fragmentary state. The play does not contradict the general assertion that a tragedy written for political effect will necessarily lose a good measure of literary interest. Yet it throws much light on the anxiety of the Athenians with regard to the Peloponnesian war. The design of Euripides was to cheer his fellow-citizens, and to console them with a vivid illustration of old oracles that promised them divine protection.

The *Helen*, which was brought out with the *Andromeda* in 412 B.C., is a noteworthy play as an example of the variety that its author employed in the handling of Greek myths. We have already seen how he modified the direct effect of tragedy by the introduction of pathetic scenes and incidents; here we find him substituting the drama for the tragedy, introducing romantic interest in the place of the older solemnity and simplicity. The *Philoctetes* of Sophocles represents a great change from the solemn grandeur of *Æschylus*; this play is quite as far removed from the *Philoctetes* as is that play from the work of the first of the great tragedians. The change was very great, and it is easy to understand how shocked some of the public must have been at the way in which Euripides handled the theatrical machinery. This play depends for its plot on the story already mentioned by Stesichorus, that it was not the real Helen who went to Troy with Paris, but, instead, a counterfeit likeness, while she was transported to Egypt. Thus Euripides did not invent this part of the story, and the ancient dramatists seem to have been as slack in inventing plots as their modern successors: it is in the treatment of the plots that they differ from other people. Herodotus had also men-

tioned another version of the myth, according to which, Paris on his way to Troy with the wife of Menelaus was driven by inclement weather to one of the mouths of the Nile, and thence was carried to Memphis, where Proteus, the Egyptian king, denounced his crime, and, retaining Helen, sent him off. When the Greeks besieged Troy, the Trojans were not able to return Helen, and of course the Greeks could not believe the reasons that were assigned, but imagined them inventions. After the war Menelaus on his way home landed at Egypt, when Proteus returned his wife to him. Euripides made use of a part of this story in his play. The scene is Egypt and the play opens with Helen's long speech, as prologue, about the condition of things. She mentions the phantom that went to Troy, and laments that the son of the dead Proteus is anxious to marry her. It is a curious fact that she mentions her alleged descent from Zeus with scepticism. And if Helen, his own daughter, doubted it, who need believe it? the spectators may have asked. Suddenly Teucer, one of the Greek heroes, appears, and Helen soon gathers from his evident hatred of her in what estimation she is held by the Greeks. He tells her that her mother has killed herself for shame at Helen's misdeeds, and that her brothers, Castor and Polydeuces, or, as the Romans called him, Pollux, have come to the same end. She hears of the sufferings of the heroes on their return and the rumors of the death of Menelaus. Her despair is expressed to the chorus of Greek girls, who are full of sympathy. She enters the house to learn what she can of the fate of Menelaus at the very moment when that hero reaches the shore where his ship has been wrecked. He is in dire distress, and Euripides, after his fashion, draws a pitiful picture of his misery and squalor. This was but part of his general treatment of the drama, whereby what had been abstract personifications of more or less majestic qualities became simple men and women who aroused sympathy by their intelligible human sufferings. In this play Menelaus is in rags, and when he knocks at the door of a house he is answered rudely by an old slave woman, who knows the fate that threatens all Greeks. His surprise is great when he hears that Helen is there; the story is absolutely inexplicable. Helen returns with the chorus, and the husband and wife are thus brought face to face. He comes forward as a suppliant, probably with a bowed head, and then in a moment they recognize each other. Helen possesses the key of the mystery, but Menelaus is naturally puzzled between this unexpected appearance of his wife and his confidence in the whole history of his life for many years, and he is about to withdraw, when a messenger arrives to tell him that his wife, a Trojan captive, whom he had left in a cave on the shore with his companions, had vanished into thin air, uttering words that removed



all doubt. Helen is thus restored, unstained, to the love of Menelaus.

The rest of the play, nearly a thousand lines, is taken up with the planning and execution of an ingenious device to outwit the Egyptian king and to reach home. Helen tells him that her husband has been wrecked here, and that his dead body has been cast ashore. She says that it is the custom of the Greeks to place such corpses on ships and to set them sailing away with the body and offerings to the sea-gods. When they have received permission from the king to do this, all is settled, and they put it into accomplishment. When the king learns how he has been deceived he is furious with his sister who has lent herself to the plot, but his wrath is stayed by the Dioscuri, Castor and Polydeuces, who affirm that all has happened according to the will of the gods.

The modern reader notices the extreme care that is taken to prevent the occurrence of any incident that has not already been announced and thoroughly described beforehand, a fact which shows the effort of the writer to make most prominent his treatment of the theme. What we understand by the dramatic movement was not allowed to outweigh the merit of the execution. The dramatist was given the freedom of choice among a number of subjects of a similar kind, and these he had to treat in a more or less conventional way, his method being the striking quality; just as the Italian painters were free to paint any subject that they could find in religious history, and everything depended on the painter's skill. Yet, as, after all, the leading figure in, say the scene at Gethsemane, was a man in a garden, the truth of the delineation of Euripides is only determined by the test of comparison with human life. Or, if we take the comparison frequently made between this side of the Greek tragedy and the modern opera, we shall notice how much more important in them both is the lyrical, musical, narrative, or disputative treatment than the dramatic movement which we demand on the stage. Yet, in the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles, a good part of the interest lies in the uncertainty of the spectator as to whether Neoptolemus was to relent or to persist in his harshness; and, in fact, all of his plays that have come down to us are marked by careful construction. This quality disappears in Euripides, who trusts rather to vividness of momentary effect. In modern and very modern poetry we see writers in the same way placing confidence in lines and passages with no inspiring message to deliver to the world.

In this play Euripides shows his usual skill and masterly execution. The chorus sings in graceful verses the escape of Helen and her arrival at home, and the action is brisk. It is easy to see how great was the influence of Euripides on the later comedy. It was only in the form



that he clung to the old tragedy. The spirit was active that was in time to abandon the paths that Æschylus and Sophocles had made their own, but the facility of his workmanship rendered him content with the old forms. The modifications that Euripides introduced have been the object of severe denunciations from those who fancy that literature, having once found a good method, should always preserve it; in other words, that the expression of thought should be above all things artificial; and the Helen, with its happy ending, has been the especial recipient of this wrath. Yet, one of its characters, Theonoe, is very nearly the most delicately drawn of all those into whom Euripides has breathed a quality of resemblance to life and a subtle personality which are most fascinating. She knows the minds of the gods, that Here and Aphrodite are at variance with regard to the issue of the adventure, and she holds the decision in her own hands: if she tells her brother, the amorous king of Egypt, that Menelaus and Helen are there, she will bring them to ruin, and by her silence she can save them. The prayers of Helen and her husband are most earnest. Helen says, "If you who are a prophetess, and believe that the gods exist, shall subvert your father's just deeds and aid your unjust brother, it is disgraceful that you should know all about what is divine and what is not, and should yet not know what is just." Can we not see why the spectators liked Euripides, even if critics said then what is still echoed, that he was corrupting the stage with novelties? Menelaus is even more urgent, and he begins by asserting that he could not fall at her knees or shed tears, because that would be weakness unbecoming a Trojan hero. This is a whiff of modern feeling, although too often men have formed an inexact notion of the readiness of the Greeks to shed tears, from the lines of Homer, and have extended the alleged habit to all of that race without discrimination of time. This, as well as other passages which might be quoted, may show that what was apparently common enough in the heroic age, had disappeared in later days before the spread of civilization. And in the representation that Euripides gives of the mythical heroes, he did not find it necessary to go back to the old portrayal of their qualities; he rather brought them down to the condition of people in his own time. The rags and tatters in which he arrayed them, as is the case with Menelaus in this play, while it aroused the scorn of Aristophanes, brought vividly before the spectators a familiar condition of suffering. This, as has been often insisted on, is the most essential part of his treatment of tragedy.

Indeed, positive proof of the change among the Greeks in respect of lachrymosity may be found in Plato's Republic, x. 605, where, after speaking of the long lamentations usual in the tragedies, where are

"persons engaged in beating their breasts and bemoaning themselves in song," Socrates goes on: "but, on the other hand, whenever sorrow comes home to one of us, you are aware that we pride ourselves upon the opposite conduct; that is, we glory in being able to endure with calmness, because in our estimation this behavior is manly, while the other is womanish." Yet, Menelaus goes on, "they say it is the part of an honorable man to shed tears in misfortunes, but not even this will I prefer to courage." And so he begins to entreat her earnestly and courageously, and with perfect success. It is easy to perceive that Euripides introduced some of his changes in the drama with a clumsiness that presents a striking contrast with the smoothness which the older forms had acquired, but he atoned for this by his skill when the characters were fairly before him, and at times, as we shall see, he modelled his plays without what seems to us awkwardness.

### III.

Too often, however, we are disposed to call awkwardness merely what differs from our own notions, and since what we have been taught to expect in a play is a rounded completeness, we are prone to forget that what Euripides tried to offer and his audience expected to receive was abundant opportunity for eloquence. Any means that aided this object could not fail to be satisfactory. In the *Troades* (415 B.C.) the action is nothing: the play is a succession of pathetic scenes that deal with the final misery of that captured town, and one striking thing is the attempt to show how noble was Troy even in its fall, and how dearly bought was the Grecian victory. The Greeks, as Cassandra says in the play, lost innumerable men, and gave up all that made life sweet in behalf of a woman who was carried away by her own consent and not by violence. They died, not in exile, and those whom Ares slew saw not their children, nor were they prepared for the tomb by the hands of a wife, but they lie in a strange land. The Trojans, however, won the fairest renown, inasmuch as they died for their country; those who were slain in battle were buried with all the usual rites, honored by the attentions of their friends and relatives. And those who had been spared continued to live with their wives and children, a joy denied the Greeks.

No occasion is lost to show how much ruin success brought upon the Greeks; nor are the Trojan woes forgotten. The sufferings of the captured women who are divided as slaves among the Greek generals are made most vivid. Indeed, nothing is spared: Cassandra falls into the hands of Agamemnon; Polyxena is destined for an offering on the grave of Achilles; Hecuba is assigned to Odysseus; Andromache to

Neoptolemus; and the young Astyanax is snatched from his mother to be flung from the walls. These separate incidents are not enough: Helen and Hecuba quarrel in the presence of Menelaus, who seems to condemn yet is evidently in his heart ready to forgive his faithless wife, and finally the captive women are led forth wailing, while Troy sinks in flames. Such are the woes that form this tragedy. It was written ten years after the Hecuba, which seems almost to be a continuation of it, and the Andromache, it will be remembered, treats the same events.

The Mad Heracles is full of tragic horror. It contains two separate actions, woven, however, into a single play wherein the promised peaceful solution is suddenly changed into the blackest tragedy. The scene is laid in Thebes, before the temple of Zeus. Lycus has seized the throne during the absence of Heracles, who is ordered by Eurystheus to fetch Cerberus from the lower world, and has determined to put to death Megara, the wife of Heracles, and her children. Just at the fatal moment Heracles returns, and prepares to take vengeance on the tyrant. Suddenly, however, his plans are frustrated by an attack of madness: he fancies that he is at Mycenæ, and mistaking his own family for that of Eurystheus he kills them all. This delusion is sent upon him by Here, and Pallas Athene rids him from it. His remorse when he has recovered his senses is most acute; he wishes to kill himself, but Theseus, whom he had brought back with him from the lower regions, manages to console him, and he determines to accompany Theseus to Athens and there to atone for his deeds by sacrifices. Fortunately there is in English Mr. Browning's excellent translation of this play, to which the reader can be referred. Here is a song of the chorus, who lament their age and infirmity:

“ Youth is a pleasant burthen to me;  
 But age on my head, more heavily  
 Than the crags of Aetna, weighs and weighs,  
 And darkening cloaks the lids and intercepts the rays.  
 Never be mine the preference  
 Of an Asian empire's wealth, nor yet  
 Of a house all gold, to youth, to youth  
 That's beauty, whatever the gods dispense!  
 Whether in wealth we joy, or fret  
 Paupers,—of all God's gifts most beautiful, in truth!

“ But miserable murderous age I hate!  
 Let it go to wreck, the waves adown,  
 Nor ever by rights plague tower or town  
 Where mortals bide, but still elate  
 With wings, on ether, precipitate,  
 Wander them round — nor wait!



" But if the gods, to man's degree,  
 Had wit and wisdom, they would bring  
 Mankind a twofold youth, to be  
 Their virtue's sign-mark, all should see,  
 In those with whom life's winter thus grew spring.  
 For when they died, into the sun once more  
 Would they have traversed twice life's racecourse o'er ;  
 While ignobility had simply run  
 Existence through, nor second life begun.

" And so might we discern both bad and good  
 As surely as the starry multitude  
 Is numbered by the sailors, one and one.  
 But now the gods by no apparent line  
 Limit the worthy and the base define ;  
 Only, a certain period rounds, and so  
 Brings man more wealth,— but youthful vigor, no ! "

The pathetic scene when Heracles awakes from a slumber, after murdering his wife and children, is most impressive. He had been fastened to a column as he sunk in a swoon, and his first words are :

" Hah —  
 In breath indeed I am — see things I ought —  
 Æther, and earth, and these the sunbeam-shafts !  
 But then — some billow and strange whirl of sense  
 I have fallen into ! and breathings hot I breathe —  
 Smoked upwards, not the steady work from lungs.  
 See now ! Why bound — at moorings like a ship —  
 About my young breast and young arm, to this  
 Stone piece of carved work broke in half, do I  
 Sit, have my rest in corpses' neighborhood ?  
 Strewn on the ground are winged darts, and bow  
 Which played my brother-shieldman, held in hand,—  
 Guarded my side, and got my guardianship !  
 I can not have gone back to Hades — twice  
 Begun Eurustheus' race I ended thence ?  
 But I nor see the Sisupheian stone,  
 Nor Plouton, nor Demeter's sceptred maid !  
 I am struck witless sure ! Where can I be ?  
 Ho then ! what friend of mine is near or far —  
 Some one to cure me of bewilderment ?  
 For naught familiar do I recognize."

Then the hero's father comes up to him and explains the condition of things slowly, reluctantly, as if fearing still for his son's reason, who presses on unsuspecting and is at last overwhelmed on learning all that he has done. When he bids farewell to his father and is about to start away with Theseus, his words are most impressive. In the first place, Euripides put into the mouth of Heracles most serious doubts about the gods. He says that he can not believe they are so adulterous as they are reputed to be,

" Nor, that with chains they bind each other's hands,  
 Have I judged worthy faith, at any time ;  
 Nor shall I be persuaded — one is born

His fellows' master! since God stands in need —  
 If he is really God—of nought at all.  
 These are the poets' pitiful conceits!"

Probably these bold expressions of Euripides could only be placed in the mouth of a son of Zeus; the poet left for himself the defense that he was merely making a dramatic use of a god's grumbling, while in fact he was making a serious attack on the whole Greek mythology. Heracles thus goes on:

"But this it was I pondered, though woe-whelmed —  
 'Take heed lest thou be taxed with cowardice  
 Somehow in leaving thus the light of day!' —  
 For whoso cannot make a stand against  
 These same misfortunes, neither could withstand  
 A mere man's dart, oppose death, strength to strength.  
 Therefore unto thy city I will go"

(He is speaking to Theseus and means Athens).

"And have the grace of thy ten thousand gifts.  
 There! I have tasted of ten thousand toils  
 As truly — never waived a single one,  
 Nor let these runnings drop from out my eyes!  
 Nor ever thought it would have come to this —  
 That I from out my eyes do drop tears! Well!  
 At present, as it seems, one bows to fate.  
 So be it! Old man, thou seest my exile —  
 Seest, too, me — my children's murderer!  
 These give thou to the tomb, and deck the dead,  
 Doing them honor with thy tears — since me  
 Law does not sanction! Propping on her breast,  
 And giving them into their mother's arms,  
 — Reconstitute the sad community  
 Which I, unhappy, brought to nothingness —  
 Not by my will! And, when earth hides the dead,  
 Live in this city! — sad, but, all the same,  
 Force thy soul to bear woe along with me!  
 O children — who begat and gave you birth —  
 Your father, has destroyed you! nought you gain  
 By those fair deeds of mine I laid you up,  
 As by main-force I labored glory out  
 To give you — that fine gift of fatherhood!  
 And thee, too, O my poor one, I destroyed,  
 Not rendering like for like, as when thou kept'st  
 My marriage-bed inviolate, — those long  
 Household-seclusions draining to the dregs  
 Inside my house! O me, my wife, my boys —  
 And, O myself, how, miserably-moved,  
 Am I disyoked now from both boys and wife!  
 O bitter those delights of kisses now —  
 And bitter these my weapons' fellowship!  
 For I am doubtful whether shall I keep  
 Or cast away these arrows which will clang  
 Ever such words out, as they knock my side —  
 'Us — thou didst murder wife and children with!  
 Us — child-destroyers — still thou keepest thine!'

Ha, shall I bear them in my arms, then? What  
 Say for excuse? Yet, naked of my darts  
 Wherewith I did my bravest, Hellas through,  
 Throwing myself beneath foot to my foes,  
 Shall I die basely? No! relinquishment  
 Of these must never be,— companions once,  
 We sorrowfully must observe the pact!

\* \* \* \* \*

O land of Kadmos, Theban people all,  
 Shear off your locks, lament one wide lament,  
 Go to my children's grave and, in one strain,  
 Lament the whole of us — my dead and me —  
 Since all together are fordone and lost,  
 Smitten by Heré's single stroke of fate!"

Even to this Euripides adds a few lines of talk between Heracles and Theseus that make the last scene yet more pathetic, and the play ends with their departure for Athens.

This tragedy is an excellent specimen of the art of Euripides. The unexpected change by which the arrival of Heracles, that promised relief and blessing, suddenly accomplishes ruin, was a device that he was very fond of, and one that obviously gave his plays a novel charm. Even more important was the way in which the pitiableness of the awakening Heracles is brought out. To be sure, the machinery, by means of which Here secures his madness, is like some of that in the *Iliad*; yet the tendency of the play is towards making the Greek deities despised, for just so far as they are brought down from heaven and exhibited as human beings, is their conduct estimated as would be that of men and women in like circumstances, and this is a test which they can not well endure. So long as they were kept aloof from criticism in an unknown heaven, they escaped too rigorous judgment, as does any aristocracy which is hidden from its victims. Yet in mythology, as in life, knowledge is a democratic element; science is the great solvent of conventions, and, since there is but one right, the mere statement of wrong-doing, especially when its mischief is seen, is at once condemnation. It was in this way that Euripides formed the connecting link between antiquity and modern times, by representing the right of individual judgment and its superiority over the acceptance of tradition. That he should have been condemned is only natural: the man who first utters what many feel, and what is to become a commonplace in the future, is sure of opposition. Yet Euripides, in time, carried the public with him, for views like his, however condemned by authority, when once uttered in a free community, have to be solved, even if the solution overthrows the existing state of affairs; and his thoughts were those of a period when the old faith was decaying and new questions were forcing themselves forward. It





is true that the person who gives expression to any feeling helps in a way to further its influence, but he does not create it, although he suffers all the opprobrium that attaches itself to a ringleader, and in this way Euripides bore the brunt of all the odiousness of the irresistible change. There were very many to blame him for what he did, who regretted what they regarded as his perversion of the old tragedy, his abandonment of the old methods, and who, as was the case with Aristophanes, looked back longingly on the happy time when the tragedy had represented something greater than real life, forgetting that Æschylus had, like Euripides, only given form and utterance to the feelings of his own day, and that literature languishes when a writer decides to say what is expected of him rather than what he feels. We shall find abundant evidence of the extent to which even Aristophanes, much as he loved the past, was influenced by the present in his management of his art. Euripides apparently felt no scruples about moving with the current, and so gives us a most distinct example of the changes of this interesting period.

In the *Electra* we may see once more how different was his way of looking at the old subjects from that of his predecessors. Fortunately, we are able to compare it directly with the treatment of the same subject by both Æschylus and Sophocles, and yet it is to be borne in mind that the relative position of Euripides is not to be determined by this play alone. One striking thing in it is the frank criticism that it contained of the *Libation Pourers* of Æschylus. Then, it will be remembered, *Electra* recognizes the lock that Orestes laid on her father's grave by its likeness to her own hair, and her foot exactly filled the print left on the sand by her brother. Now Aristophanes, as we shall see later, was never tired of turning Euripides to ridicule, and of comparing him unfavorably with Æschylus; here Euripides had a chance to revenge himself, and although he made the older poet seem absurd, he put himself in no commendable light. Moreover, the more marked the success of his fling at Æschylus, the greater was the confusion that this double wrought in his own play. Yet it is possible to find a certain satisfaction in detecting this answer of Euripides to the jibes of his bitter parodist. It is but two or three lines that he employs for this purpose, but they must have had a great effect among the quick-witted Athenians. After all, we must remember that he had been attacked as no man has ever been attacked in the whole history of literature by the ablest master of invective that the world has ever known, and with ribaldry that has since lost the social position it then held. Here is his reply:

An old man who had carried Orestes away when Ægisthus slew Agamemnon is present, who says to *Electra*:

"Do you examine the hair, placing it against your own, whether the tint of the shorn tresses be the same. For of children of the same father, most parts of the body are accustomed to be naturally alike."

To this Electra replies :

"You utter words unworthy of a wise man, if you think that my very bold brother would come into this land by stealth through fear of Aegisthus. Then how will the lock of hair match mine, the one belonging to a well-born man trained in athletic sports, the other to a woman employed in combing wool? It is impossible. And you will find a great many persons, in no way related, having hair of the same appearance."

The old man then says :

"But do you step into his track and consider the print of his slipper, whether it be of the measure of your foot."

Electra: "But how can there be footprints on stony ground? And if there were any, the feet of a brother and of a sister would not be of the same size: the man's foot would be larger."

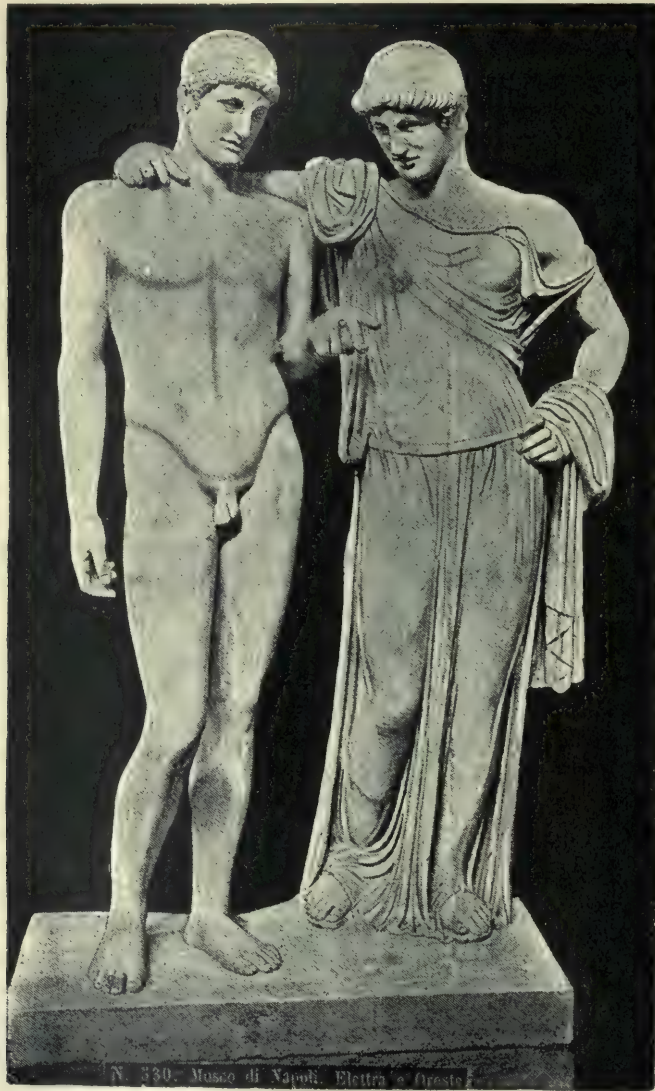
That was all, but the memory of these lines must have clung to those who afterwards saw the play of Æschylus acted. In the Phœnician Virgins Euripides had also paid his respects to the earlier dramatist, who had at great length described the contending generals in his Seven against Thebes. Here is the passage :

Eteocles says: "It shall be so; and having gone to the city of the seven towns, I will appoint chiefs at the gates, as you advise, having opposed equal champions against equal foes. But to mention the name of each would be a great delay, the enemy being encamped under our very walls. But I will go that I may not be idle with my hand."

While we remember that this was the only means of answering the attacks of Aristophanes that lay in the reach of Euripides, that even the serious tragedy had to be employed by him as a means of expressing opinions for which there was no other utterance, just as political feeling often employed the same device; yet, here as everywhere, the answer to the attack appears unfortunate, however interesting it may be. Euripides, not Æschylus, is hurt by the implied assault. That at a given moment his patience should have yielded is only natural, and our sympathy is awakened for the man who was the object of so violent abuse that the echo of it still affects men's judgment even at the present day, but his answer only marred the singleness of impression that his play would otherwise have produced.

The subject is the familiar one, Electra's recognition of her brother and the murder of Ægisthus and Clytemnestra. Yet Euripides

employs his usual art to render the story more pathetic by representing Electra as the wife of a poor peasant, of noble family, to be sure, "but



ORESTES AND ELECTRA.  
(*Herculaneum Group.*)

yet poor in means," he says of himself, "whence noble descent is lost," even in the heroic age. This humble station secured the pity of the audience for the daughter of Agamemnon, and at the same



time made it unlikely that she should be recognized by Orestes. The recognition, which is the best scene in the play, is much prolonged by this device, and is only brought about, in the failure of the means that Æschylus had employed, by the intervention of the old man referred to above. He employs a means already approved by Homer and recognizes Orestes by an old scar. From this point the play moves swiftly to its end. The murder of Clytemnestra, who is lured into the peasant's hut, is impressive; that of Ægisthus is described by a messenger. At the conclusion the twins, Castor and Polydeuces, appear and order what shall be done afterwards. The play, with occasional merit, is ill-suited to bear comparison with the plays of Æschylus and Sophocles treating the same subject.

Euripides does himself non-justice in his *Ion*, a play that is singularly important in its indications of the future growth of the drama. For one thing, it is not a tragedy, but a play with a happy ending and a long and complicated plot. In this respect Euripides was an innovator; it was not the mere crisis of an event that he chose for his subject, but rather an enlargement, a fuller development of the event, into which he introduced unsuspected circumstances. Thus, it will be noticed, advancing civilization always complicates the artist's work, for civilization is a process of accumulating knowledge and experience which make themselves more prominent in the mirror that the artist holds up to nature. Just as a boy in gazing at a landscape will see only the trees on which green apples or nuts grow, and the brook in which he may bathe after gorging himself with unseasonable fruit, an older person will perceive innumerable other things according to his knowledge: the farmer will observe the wheat that needs cutting, the meadow that must be drained, the pasture to be plowed; the geologist will notice the lay of the land, the rocks, the soil; every one will see only what his education makes prominent. Thus, in the last century, the poets saw in the landscape only a violent contrast to the city; nightingales, larks, sparrows were but birds except so far as their differences were pointed out by Latin poets. Flowers were flowers, without distinction of variety. Foliage was green, the sky was blue—the reader will remember how the *Edinburgh Review* took Wordsworth to task for flying in the face of that obvious fact by calling the sunset sky *green*—the evening was dark. Gradually there became perceptible in the colors of things hues that before were overlooked; insects and birds were distinguished and defined. The old bonds were soon broken; the peasant, whose appearance in literature may be now seen surviving in the chorus of an Italian opera, became a man, and this change was felt in politics, theology, philosophy, as well as in art and literature. Euripides saw a similar change, and the old unity was

gone, just as now no educated person can read a newspaper or look at a landscape without receiving a host of impressions such as our great-grandfathers never knew.

Hence we are justified in explaining the simplicity of the earlier Greek tragedies as the result of unpracticed perceptions rather than of artistic exclusion. The feeling of the earlier lack of complexity is common, and was thus explained by Edgar A. Poe in his "Marginalia":\*

"About the 'Antigone,' as about all the ancient plays, there seems to me a certain *baldness*, the result of inexperience in art, but which pedantry would force us to believe the result of a studied and supremely artistic simplicity. Simplicity, indeed, is a very important feature of all true art—but *not* the simplicity which we see in the Greek drama. . . . In the drama, the direct, straight-forward, *un-German* Greek had no Nature so immediately [as to the sculptor] from which to make a copy. He did what he could. . . . The profound sense of one or two tragic, or rather melo-dramatic, elements (such as the idea of inexorable Destiny—this sense gleaming at intervals from out the darkness of the ancient stage), serves, in the very imperfection of its development, to show, not the dramatic ability, but the dramatic *inability* of the ancients. In a word, . . . the complex [arts] . . . demand the long and painfully progressive experience of ages. To the Greeks, beyond doubt, their drama *seemed* perfection—it fully answered, to them, the dramatic end, excitement, and this fact is urged as proof of their drama's perfection in itself. It need only be said, in reply, that their art and their sense of art were necessarily on a par."

It is not necessary to agree with the whole of this statement, trimmed and curtailed as it is, before acknowledging that it describes what many feel. Thus Mr. Lowell, in his article on Mr. Swinburne's tragedies, which is to be found in his "Among My Books," comparing the Electra of Sophocles with Hamlet, calls attention to the "difference between the straightforward bloody-mindedness of Orestes and the metaphysical punctiliousness of the Dane. Yet each," he goes on, "was natural in his several way, and each would have been unintelligible to the audience for which the other was intended. That Fate which the Greeks made to operate from without, we recognize at work within in some vice of character or hereditary disposition."

These differences, it must be borne in mind, were not rejected by Sophocles, any more than the expression of individual characteristics was rejected by the great Greek sculptors; they and he did not feel

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\* See his Works. New York: Armstrong (1884), V. 266.



them. Euripides did, and this play bears many traces of the effect they wrought upon his mind. Let us first examine the plot.

The play opens with the usual prologue, after which Ion, a young attendant of the temple at Delphi, comes in and sings a hymn as he performs his sacred duties. Then there enters the chorus of Athenian women, who wander about admiring the decorations of the temple; they are accompanying Creusa, who is weeping. Ion asks the cause, and she makes a vague answer, that sad memories were called up and she wonders where she can appeal for justice if we are undone by the injustice of the gods. She then explains that she has come to Delphi to be freed from barrenness, and tells him of her descent and marriage. In turn she asks him who he is, and he tells her that he was a foundling, and was carried into the temple and brought up to fill his present place, and that he has no means of knowing who his parents were. Creusa then recounts her own story, pretending that it was the experience of one of her friends, who had borne a child to Apollo and had laid it in his cave, whence it had mysteriously disappeared. If the child had lived, it would have been of about the age of Ion. She wonders if the god will utter an oracle disclosing this child's fate, but this Ion deems unlikely, for it would be to his interest to keep the affair concealed. While Creusa complains to the god, her husband Xuthus enters, who tells her that the oracle of Trophonius has promised that they should not leave the shrine at Delphi childless. Ion then remonstrates with the deity while going on with sacred rites, and the chorus pray that the house of Erechtheus, to which Creusa belongs, be not left childless. Then Xuthus appears once more and meets Ion, whom he greets as his child, explaining that the oracle had promised that the first person he met issuing from the temple should be his son. Ion, however, is filled with a desire to see his mother, and withstands the invitation of Xuthus to come to Athens, because he knows the contempt that the people of that city feel for strangers. At last, however, he consents, hoping to find that his mother belonged to that city, and the two depart to celebrate the answer of the oracle with a feast. This action pains the chorus, who see what a disappointment it will be to Creusa.

They were right; when she finds out how things stand she is indignant, and she expresses very plainly her wrath with Apollo. An old pedagogue readily persuades her to seek vengeance, but the plan miscarries, and when it has been determined that she shall be stoned to death she rushes to the altar as a suppliant. Ion hastens to pursue her and remonstrates angrily with her; he is unwilling to slay her at the altar, and laments that she should escape her just punishment, till the old Pythia appears, bringing with her the wraps he had worn when



THE RAVINE OF DELPHI.



she found him in his infancy. He is much moved, and Creusa is soon able to prove that the embroidery was her work, and the other ornaments of the child she describes, so that Ion is manifestly the child whom she thought she had lost. Ion himself is not wholly convinced, and is on the point of entering the temple to get full information from Apollo when Athene appears, explaining everything. They all then withdraw their complaints of Apollo, and the play ends.

Such, then, is the plot of this play, with its intricacies plainly soluble by the audience and its cross-purposes thoroughly intelligible to them at least. From the beginning they were in possession of the whole secret, and they watched the dialogue of Creusa and Ion, and their misunderstanding with doubtless the same delight that one feels in witnessing any delicate social fencing. To be sure, by the necessities of the drama, it was a divine myth that formed the plot, but all that was remote was their names: they were mother and son, animated by a familiar human feeling. They were not abstract personalities moved hither and thither by a blind fate, but people groping their way to the light amid ordinary obstacles. Custom forbade that Euripides should raise his fellow-citizens to the position that was held by gods and mythical heroes; but these heroes and divine beings he was at liberty to represent like his fellow-citizens, just as Voltaire in the last century veiled his modern teaching beneath the conventional stage-dresses and scenery. The great public, even of Athens, atoned for its real change of view by clinging warmly to the form, just as now a man who wore his hat inside of a church would be more obnoxious than a decorous atheist.

In Creusa's recognition of Ion's baby-clothes we see the modern drama making its appearance on the Greek stage. There is no antique simplicity here, but the new-born complexity of emotion in which hopes and fears are shifting with every line that is uttered. Indeed, one may almost go so far as to say that the way in which Xuthus recognizes Ion for his son represents the old-fashioned machinery of the stage, and that Creusa's slower recognition represents the greater interest of the new methods.

It is to be noticed, however, that this novelty must be limited to the devices of the drama alone, and that in Penelope's slow recognition of Odysseus we have an authoritative precedent for this slow solution, and throughout the Greek tragedies we are struck by the frequent corroboration of what Plato says in the *Republic* (x. 595). "Of all those beautiful tragic poets he seems to have been the original master and guide." Indeed, if the digression may be allowed, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* held the place of sacred books among the Greeks; they formed the Bible that underlay the whole work of their civilization, just



as they continue to hold in our day a place quite equal to that of some of the remoter books of the Old Testament. And as they were in old times what for that matter they are now in part, the groundwork of education, we continually notice to how great an extent the subsequent literary fabric of Greece was built up on them as a foundation. From no other source did they draw such light and guidance. In this case there stood in every one's memory the ideal recognition in the *Odyssey* just mentioned; and throughout the poetry, in imitation as well as in the unceasing references, we find continual proof of the authority of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Even more interesting in the *Ion* is the condemnation of the rude tales of the old mythology. *Ion* speaks frankly: "Apollo," he says, "deserves remonstrance. What is he doing? He betrays virgins by violence and neglects the perishing children whom he has privily begotten. Do not thou act so, but when thou hast power follow virtue. For whatsoever mortal is base, him do the gods punish. How then is it right that you, who establish laws for mortals, shall yourselves be guilty of lawlessness? . . . Ye do wrong, pursuing pleasure rather than prudence. It is unjust to call men vile who imitate the evil deeds of the gods instead of those who give such teaching." To be sure, the play ends with a recognition of the power and wisdom of the gods, but these words had been uttered, and their justice is not contradicted by the facts. Elsewhere in the play Euripides speaks of slaves: "For one thing," he says, "brings shame to slaves, the name. In all other respects, no slave that is honorable is worse than a free man." Words like these are sure to be remembered, and they attest for us the new spirit that was making itself felt in the drama. It is not in this play alone that these sentiments are to be found; here, however, they combine with the general construction to strengthen the impression of modernness.

The exact date of the production of *Ion* is not known, but it is conjectured to have been about 419 B. C. It, at least, bears no traces of having been composed in a period of public distress.

#### IV.

The two plays of which *Iphigeneia* is the heroine are very noteworthy. The *Iphigeneia* in *Aulis* was brought out with the *Bacchæ* after the poet's death, and was one of his latest compositions. It bears distinct marks of his most striking qualities. The mythical story is made interesting by its compact presentation of personal qualities; the Greek heroes and the fate of *Troy* are but the setting for the drawing of a lovely character.



Agamemnon has vowed to sacrifice his daughter Iphigeneia to placate Artemis who prevents the fleet from sailing to Troy. In order to bring her to Aulis he writes to Clytemnestra that he has promised to marry their daughter to Achilles, and the two women join him in total unconsciousness of what is really designed. When they discover Agamemnon's intention, Clytemnestra is overcome with wrathful sorrow, and Iphigeneia at first pleads for her life; when, however, she sees how inevitable is the sacrifice, she resigns herself to her fate with the most touching readiness. At the last moment, however, Artemis, relenting, substitutes a hind for the human victim, and announces through Calchas, the seer, that she is satisfied, and that the fleet may sail. Euripides outdoes even himself in the pathos which he has woven into this play.

"I have made up my mind to die," says Iphigeneia, "and I would fain act gloriously, discarding all ignoble thoughts. . . The sailing of the ships and the destruction of Troy depend upon me, as well as the future fate of women, that the barbarians do not steal them away from Greece. All these things I shall set right by my death, and my fame, as the freer of Greece, shall be blessed. Moreover, it is not right that I should be too fond of life, for thou hast brought me forth for the common good of Greece, not for thyself alone. . . If Artemis wishes my body, shall I, a mere mortal, withstand the goddess? That can not be. I give my body for Greece. Sacrifice it and capture Troy. This shall long be my memorial, my children, my wedding, my glory."

The whole play abounds with touching scenes.

In the Iphigeneia among the Taurians, which was written earlier, the time is laid twenty years later, when Orestes, who in the other play was an infant that had fallen asleep when his mother carried him to Agamemnon's camp, has grown up, and has come to the Tauri to bear away the image of Artemis and thus secure a respite from the Furies who pursue him since he killed his mother. He is accompanied by Pylades, and the play gives a fascinating picture of their deep-seated friendship. Iphigeneia is among the Tauri, where she has been since Artemis carried her away from Aulis, and she has just had a dream which, she believes, announces the death of Orestes, when word is brought to her that two strangers have landed on the coast. They have thereby exposed themselves to a great peril, for it is the custom of the place to sacrifice to the goddess all the Greeks who reach that inhospitable shore. She sees them, and, of course, not knowing who they are, determines that one shall be spared to take a letter to her brother. Then follows a beautiful contest between the two friends as to which shall give up his life to save the other. But this letter makes them known,

and at once the state of affairs is altered. The sole question is how they shall all escape with the image of Artemis from the land of Thoas, the king of the country. This scene, which bears a likeness to the similar adventure in the *Helen*, is interesting, especially when Thoas captures them, but Athene appears and bids him to let them go, and with this divine interference the play ends. This play, it will be remembered, has been imitated in later times, and notably by Goethe, but no one has outdone the early poet in his vivid rendering of the power of friendship. It was already a stride forward to have seen that unselfishness was an admirable thing; after all, a decaying civilization, like



IPHIGENEIA GIVING THE LETTER TO PYLADES.  
(From *Apulian Amphora*.)

waning health, opens men's eyes to unsuspected virtues. Nor is this all that Euripides has done in this play; he has told the incidents with a care and grace he has seldom equalled. The captive Greek maidens utter the tenderest longing for their distant home, and the modern reader feels in perfect sympathy with the play until the attempt is made to deceive Thoas; then a discord arises. As one might say, we can sympathize with the Achilles of the *Iliad*, but we can not approve of Odysseus, the father of Greek deceit, and here, while friendship and fraternal affection are put in an honorable light, the way in which Thoas is circumvented is painful and repellant. Even



the ready appeal to divine sanction does not convince us, though it may explain the discord. The savagery of the Greek mythology ate into the heart of morality, and although the gods approved deceit, they were unable to make it honorable, and only brought confusion upon themselves. The Greeks paid dearly for their subtle intellect by letting it weave an ingenious web over simplicity and straightforwardness.

Even more striking, however, is the construction of the end of the play, where the goddess Athene appears and complicates what was drawing to a natural end by special interposition. This method of concluding his plays by means of a *deus ex machina* is one of the characteristics of the later drama as handled by Euripides, and, like almost everything that is peculiar to him, it has been attacked as an enfeeblement of the tragedy by those who disliked him, and has been stoutly defended, sometimes indeed held up for special commendation, by those who admired him. The safest course may be simply to mention it as a change from the old custom, and one that he employs very frequently. Thus in the *Orestes*, *Hippolytus*, *Andromache*, *Suppliants*, *Iphigeneia among the Taurians*, *Ion*, *Helen*, and *Electra*, we find divinities appearing who, in all except the *Andromache* and *Electra*, have a more or less important influence upon the action of the play. Only a few are without them; among these are the *Heraclidæ*, *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, the *Phœnician Women*, and the *Medea*, and in this last *Medea* is removed by a machine, as Aristotle in his "Poetics" notes and condemns, saying that the conclusion of a tragedy should be the result of the action, and not be introduced by an artifice as here. In the *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, or among the *Taurians*, all goes smoothly to its end, but the leading persons, when escaping, are driven back by a storm, only to be released by Athene, who once again sets them free.

The reason of this modification of the drama is not plain. Unfortunately many of the opinions of modern men with regard to Euripides are taken without question from his deadly foe Aristophanes, who lost no opportunity to deride his detested contemporary, and always ascribed the worst motives to all that he did. In this case, however, it may have been the desire to bring the play into coherence with the old myth, and one especially flattering to the Athenians, that inspired the clumsy device. It is hard to suppose that the general modification of the drama was introduced without what at least seemed some important intention, and it may be hasty to condemn it, because its real meaning is obscure. Calderon, in modern times, made frequent use of similar methods, so far without condemnation; and it may be that Euripides, by assigning this important influence to the gods, expressed



the general or common sentiment of his audience that their interference in human affairs was possible, or that in the past it had been possible. What to Æschylus had been implied by the course of affairs now, in darker days, seemed like a miracle, not a natural event. Fate seemed to deny, what had once been plain, that the divine control produced good fortune insensibly. At this time it was necessary to show that the appearance of the gods was fitful and intermittent. Their introduction was homage to their power, and only in this way could their authority be conceived. All these suggestions are of course but the most meager hypotheses; the fact remains that the *deus ex machina* is a very mysterious divinity, and that the number of his worshippers is very small. Crude as may be the plan of Euripides, it is evident that it betokens a different view of the old question of responsibility for sin. In Æschylus, and even in the earlier plays of Sophocles, there are abundant signs of the survival of the notion that guilt is an inherited thing, that may be atoned for vicariously, while the later growth of individuality produced in the plays of Euripides a sense of personal responsibility which demanded the separate appearance of the gods, if their control of events was to receive any sort of recognition. The apparent clumsiness of his device is but the inevitable result of its novelty; what is done for the first time is sure to be ill done. The masterly skill of his predecessors only makes it clear that they employed generally accepted methods of accounting for the tragic discord.

## V.

In the *Bacchæ*, or the Priestesses of Dionysus, we have the only Greek tragedy concerned with the story of the god from the worship of whom tragedy had risen. Thespis, Phrynichus, and Æschylus had already treated similar subjects, but their treatment of these myths is wholly lost. This play, which was brought out after the death of Euripides, by his nephew, alone survives to bring vividly before us a side of the religious life of the Greeks which only careful study can make at all intelligible.

Dionysus opens the play with the announcement that he is come to the land of Thebes from the distant East, introducing his worship into Hellas, and he deprecates the opposition of Pentheus, the king of the land, while he is glad of the number of his worshippers who already have joined his maddening revels. The chorus sing a wild lyrical song in praise of the god, and Cadmus, the former king, and Teiresias, the blind seer, both old men, appear with the announcement that they, too, are bent on honoring the same deity. They are joined by Pentheus



DIONYSUS AND PERSONIFIED WINE.



who has been absent and has returned to find his peaceful kingdom in a strange commotion; the women have left the palace and are wandering about the mountains, dancing in honor of this new deity, being lured away by the charmer from the Lydian land, whom he threatens severely: "If I catch him under this roof I will stop his making a noise with the thyrsus, and I will put an end to his waving his hair by cutting off his neck from his body." His surprise, which is certainly very natural, is only augmented by seeing the venerable Teiresias arrayed in dappled deer-skins, and his own grandfather, Cadmus, raging about with a thyrsus—the ivy and vine-wreathed wand carried by the adherents of Dionysus—he appeals to them to come to their senses. The two elders reason with the king and urge him to join the reveling crew and to withdraw his opposition to the new divinity, but Pentheus refuses. He renews his threats against the god and gives orders to have him brought bound before him if he is caught. Remonstrance only hardens him, nor is he moved by the appeal that the chorus make to the goddess of sanctity and their condemnation of those men who are full of self-conceit and think themselves wiser than any one else.

At this point, when the zeal of the adherents of Dionysus, and the indignation of his enemy have been clearly indicated, the god is brought in, bound, before Pentheus. The men who bring him describe their capture as only a god could be described: "He was docile in our hands, nor did he withdraw his foot in flight, but yielded willingly. Nor did he turn pale or change his wine-colored cheek, but laughed and permitted us to bind him and carry him away." They go on to say that the Bacchæ who were shut up had escaped and were free, dancing in the meadows, invoking Bromius as their god: "Of their own accord the fetters fell from their feet, and the keys unlocked the doors without mortal hand, and full of wonders is this man." Yet all these signs have no weight with Pentheus, though he himself acknowledges the more than human beauty of the god. He at once proceeds to examine the stranger, unconscious that he has the god himself before him. Dionysus does not declare himself, but speaks only of his orgies, which he says that he derived from the god of wine. Pentheus orders him to confinement near the stable; "then," he says, "you may dance. And as for the women, your companions, I will either sell them or keep them at work as slaves." Dionysus goes off to his place of punishment of his own will, threatening Pentheus, however, with punishment for his wanton insolence.

This scene is followed by a song from the chorus, who foretell the future success of the Dionysiac rites, and they invoke the god, wherever he may be, to free their companion and themselves from persecution. Their prayer is heard; the voice of the god sounds from his



prison: "Io, hear ye, hear my song, Io Bacchæ! Io Bacchæ!" An earthquake shakes the palace and announces the present god; the flame blazes up about the tomb of Semele, and the chorus sink to the ground in terror. Dionysus then enters and describes his escape from prison. Pentheus had mistaken a bull for his victim, and had bound him instead of his prisoner, and was trying to tie him when the earthquake and flame made him think that the palace was on fire. He called to the servants for water, and then drawing a sword he had chased a phantom under the impression that he was killing his prisoner, who had meanwhile left the king to his furies and had stepped out unhurt. Then Pentheus finds him with some surprise, and Dionysus, still known only as the stranger, explains that the god had helped him. Then a messenger comes in with a long account of the marvelous doings of the revelling Theban women; wine, water, and milk flowed from the ground when they struck it. Being interrupted in their sacred rites by herdsmen, they had determined to capture the king's



PENTHEUS TORN TO PIECES.

mother in order to win the king's favor, and they had without difficulty driven away the intruders, destroyed their herds, ruined everything. Armed men had been defeated by them. There was no limit to the wonders they had done. In conclusion, he urges the king not to oppose this mighty deity. But Pentheus is not moved; he determines to quell the scandal, although the stranger assures him of the hopelessness of his attempt. The king declines his offer to bring the women to the palace, but accepts the proposition that he shall go to see them for himself, disguised as a woman. When he is gone in to dress himself in women's garments, the stranger assures the chorus that the king is now in their toils, and he prays that his wits may leave him as he comes in the power of Dionysus. After a song from the chorus, the king comes out, the victim of delusion, imagines that he sees two suns and two cities of Thebes, and that his escort is a horned bull. The chorus pray that he may receive his deserts, and presently a messenger appears to narrate the fate that has befallen Pentheus: He had climbed

a fir-tree to observe the revels, when the stranger vanished, and a voice called forth from heaven, bidding the women to punish the intruder. Agave mistook her son Pentheus for a beast of chase, and with the help of the others she uprooted the tree, and with her sisters tore him to pieces. Agave returns to the city, bearing the head of her son, which she thinks is that of a lion, but Cadmus soon undeceives her, and Dionysus appears to warn that old monarch of the fate that awaits him, for Dionysus is angry at the treatment he had received at the hands of the Thebans.

In this description of the play it may yet be possible to see, through "a gray veil"—as Shelley, with more justice, called a translation—what it was that the poet wrote, and even this disguise may not wholly hide the literary art that the poet brought to the composition of this memorable tragedy. Even if the wonder at the might of Dionysus is something that has lost religious significance to us, yet its expression, which is as genuine and intense as that of those feelings which we can comprehend, can not fail to impress the least sympathetic reader. Here science may aid us by showing us that orgies such as are here described still survive among savage races, and when we read of North American Indians who carry rattlesnakes in their mouths, we are not too remote from the crude religious nature-worship that underlay the Greek religion. That Euripides appealed to a genuine feeling is obvious, but our lack of sympathy may well explain our failure to comprehend the object that the poet had in view in writing this play. That he had some definite intention is an obvious and unavoidable conclusion. It is impossible for us to imagine a man's making a single statement without a purpose, and *a fortiori* no one can write a play without a distinct intention. There is a certain opposition to this opinion from those who are vexed that men ask solely what was the moral aim of the author, but even this question is capable of a wider meaning than it sometimes receives. Euripides could even less have written the play without a meaning than we can read it without asking for one. Yet just what meaning it had for him we perhaps can conjecture as little as he could have conjectured our wonder at the play, for wholly apart from the sincere admiration of the author's skill is the knowledge of the religious feeling that animated Euripides. Many other things as unlike our current way of regarding things we understand, if not by personal sympathy, yet by the possession of an unbroken tradition. Thus many of the forms of medievalism are as remote from us as the nature-worship which throbs through these wonderful lines, but we comprehend them as a part of our intellectual inheritance from our ancestors; yet this play reminds us of the abyss



that separates the Greeks from ourselves, that only patient study of uncultivated races can ever hope to bridge.

Meanwhile hypotheses abound : some suggest that Euripides in his old age felt impelled to confess that the path of the skeptic, in which he had long strayed, was a hopeless one, and that here he renewed his allegiance to the orthodox faith. To be sure, it is a singular orthodoxy ; but it was all that he had. Others have thought that perhaps he was willing to suggest to the young Macedonian agnostics that their unripe opposition to religion was not what he could favor, and that while he reserved his own right of judgment, he condemned their undue haste. It may be, however, that in an uncongenial place he was willing to conceal his own opinions and to celebrate a popular worship, for the Macedonians did not scorn Dionysus. Nothing would have more endeared him to his new admirers than such conduct. But by far the most probable explanation is that he set here in dramatic form the religious reaction against modern learning that developed itself even earlier than the end of the Peloponnesian war, and that its fanaticism is to be discerned in the lurid lines of this play. Euripides felt the change, for no man endures such feeling alone ; the wrath of any one man finds its counterpart among other men ; no one ever curses oppression that others are not muttering their anger, and the religious excitement in these dark days must have been shared by most of those who saw ruin falling upon Athens. Superstition was begotten of terror and despair, as often happens in history, and this was perhaps the inspiration of the *Bacchæ*. Moreover, the dramatic capabilities of the subject could not fail to tempt Euripides. Whatever his purpose, he wrote a play that abounds with fire and enthusiasm such as carry force even when the religious belief that they expressed is wholly incongruous and remote. The ancients who clearly comprehended the worship of Dionysus greatly admired this play, which left its mark on much Latin poetry, and was a favorite wherever Greek literature was known. We read, for example, in Plutarch's life of Crassus, that the Parthians who defeated and slew that general were greatly delighted when some one repeated the tragic ending of the *Bacchæ* when the head of Crassus was brought before them.

No one who reads the play will fail to notice the wonderful way in which the background of natural scenery is coördinated with the natural forces that make up the interest of this complex tragedy. Throughout the plays of Euripides we observe his keen eye for nature, his susceptibility to the diverse beauty of land and sky, and often a very modern touch that makes it clear how very much men's ways of looking at things are the natural result of the measure of civilization in which they live. Of course the resemblance remains a



slight one: medievalism and the spirit of northern nations have left on the minds of modern men an indelible mark of which the earlier Greeks were innocent. Homer sees nature, as he sees men, with direct vision, and it is mainly in comparisons that he draws his vivid pictures, as here (Il. xii. 278): "But as flakes of snow fall thick on a winter day, when Zeus the Counsellor hath begun to snow, shooting forth these arrows of his to men, and he hath lulled the winds, and he snoweth continually, till he hath covered the crests of the high hills and the uttermost headlands, and the grassy plains, and rich tillage of men; and the snow is scattered over the burns and shores of the gray sea, and only the wave as it rolleth in keeps off the snow, but all other things are swathed over, when the shower of Zeus comes heavily, so from both their sides their stones flew thick," etc.

Sophocles already detects the sympathy which at times nature appears to have for men, as when Electra wails before the palace-gates over the woes of her household:

"O holy light of morn!  
O air that does the whole earth compass round!  
Oft have ye heard my cries of grief forlorn,  
And oft the echoing sound  
Of blows the breast that smite,  
When darkness yields to light.

\* \* \* \* \*

And lo, I will not fail  
To weep and mourn with wailings and with sighs,  
While yet I see the bright stars in the skies,  
Or watch the daylight glad —  
No, no, I will not fail,  
Like sorrowing nightingale,  
Before the gate to pour my sorrows free,  
My woe and sorrow at my father's door."

Yet when she sings these words the Attendant has just said:

"For lo! the sun's bright rays  
Wake up the birds to tune their matin-songs,  
And star-deckt night's dark shadows flee away."

And the student will recall the beautiful choral ode in the *Œdipus* at Colonus, already quoted, where the beauty of the scene stands in marked contrast with the melancholy of the play. Very memorable, too, is the conclusion of *Philoctetes* when that hero bids farewell to Lemnos:

PHILOCTETES.

Come, then, and let us bid farewell  
To this lone island where I dwell:  
Farewell, O home that still did'st keep  
Due vigil o'er me in my sleep;  
Ye nymphs by stream or wood that roam;  
Thou mighty voice of ocean's foam,

Where oftentimes my head was wet  
 With drivings of the South wind's fret;  
 And oft the mount that Hermes owns  
 Sent forth its answer to my groans,  
 The wailing loud as echo given  
 To me by tempest-storms sore driven;  
 And ye, O fountains clear and cool,  
 Thou Lykian well, the wolves' own pool —  
 We leave you, yea, we leave at last,  
 Though small our hope in long years past:  
 Farewell, O plain of Lemnos' isle,  
 Around whose coasts the bright waves smile,  
 Send me with prosperous voyage and fair  
 Where the great Destinies may bear,  
 Counsel of friends, and God supreme in Heaven,  
 Who all this lot of ours hath well and wisely given.

The modernness of Euripides continually appears in his view of the relation that bridges the gulf between nature and man; thus, in the *Suppliants*, he speaks of "the insatiable joy of grief, that is like the drop forever oozing from the steep rock." In the same play the chorus says: "Like a wandering cloud, I float before the stormy winds." There is frequent mention of the yearning that is called up by watching the flight of birds, but the expression varies from the formality of the lyric odes to the simplicity of lines and half-lines that merely color the passage in which they stand, while the more artificial measures rest upon the long-cultivated melic verse. The brief utterances indicate, perhaps, a deeper and more widely-spread perception of natural beauty than do the others, which may owe part of their quality to a long forgotten religious significance that had sunk to the state of rhetorical decoration. In Euripides, too, we see the beginning of a love of loneliness, of escape from the confusion of the world; in a word, he parts from the simplicity and calmness of classical antiquity, and begins to share the complexity of modern life.

The Cyclops possesses unusual interest as the sole specimen that has reached us of the satyric pieces that followed the tragic trilogies, and were it not for this solitary survival it would have been impossible, it can not be said to form conjectures, but to form a satisfactory notion of this form of dramatic composition. As it is, no well-organized mind can avoid regretting that we have not also one of the satyric plays of Æschylus, but they were naturally regarded as of far less importance than the tragedies which they accompanied, and were allowed to disappear without an effort to save them, for the last thing which antiquity could have comprehended would have been the modern scientific curiosity which rejects nothing. Even now there are plenty of people who fail to understand why students should find an interest in anything but acknowledged masterpieces.

From this play, and from what we know of the others of the same sort, it is clear that the satyric pieces were distinguished from the comedies by the fact that they had nothing to do with current life, but drew their subjects from the same stores of myths and legends that were used for the tragedies. This quality made them act more readily as a relief to the tragic gloom of the other members of the tetralogy. After three plays of a serious kind, a short one in which the tense pathetic interest could find relief was necessary, and a hero who could be laughed at or with, after a succession of those who appealed to commiseration, was required to restore the mental equilibrium of the spectators. Apparently the historic origin of the satyric plays is to be found, as the name implies, in the old chorus of satyrs that took part in the Dionysiac festivities, and from their antics arose the merri-



CHORUS IN SATYRIC PIECE.

ment that formed the most prominent quality in these plays. In the earliest times they presented the ridiculous side of the old legends, and this they preserved later.

In this play, it is the adventure of Odysseus with the Cyclops that forms the subject. The story is narrated, it will be remembered, in the ninth book of the *Odyssey*, and here it is repeated with only slight variations. The characters, too, appear as they would in a tragedy on the same subject, but they are treated with what is almost the spirit of parody, as the extracts will show. Thus, the play opens with a speech of Silenus for a prologue, like those of the tragedies of Euripides, wherein he explains that Dionysus, having been captured by



Tyrrhenian pirates, the satyrs had started under his guidance to recover him, but that they had been wrecked on this island, where Polyphemus kept them for his slaves. The young ones

“tend on the youngling sheep,  
But I remain to fill the water casks,  
Or sweeping the hard floor, or ministering  
Some impious and abominable meal  
To the fell Cyclops. I am wearied of it !”

as it is put in Shelley's translation.

After a song of the satyrs, a Greek vessel is seen approaching the coast, which turns out to be that containing Odysseus.

“Oh ! I know the man,  
Wordy and shrewd, the son of Sisyphus,”

says Silenus, and an explanation follows, after the pattern of those in the tragedies ; Odysseus explains that stress of weather had driven him thither on his homeward way from Troy, and learns what this strange land is, and that its inhabitants live, not on corn, but on milk and cheese and on the flesh of sheep.

“OD. Have they the Bromian drink from the vine's stream ?

SIL. Ah ! no ; they live in an ungracious land.

OD. And are they just to strangers ? — hospitable ?

SIL. They think the sweetest thing a stranger brings  
Is his own flesh.

OD. What ! do they eat men's flesh ?

SIL. No one comes here who is not eaten up.”

But the Cyclops is away, and Odysseus is anxious to get meat before his return. For it he offers wine, which Silenus drinks with pleasure before going to fetch the food. Then the satyrs appear and ask many questions about the siege of Troy, which is treated as an amusing joke. Helen, Silenus says,

“left that good man Menelaus.  
There should be no more women in the world  
But such as are reserved for me alone.”

But their chatter is interrupted by the return of the Cyclops, and an echo of the tragedies fills the words of Odysseus when he is bidden to hide himself :

“That will I never do !  
The mighty Troy would be indeed disgraced  
If I should fly one man. How many times  
Have I withstood, with shield immovable,  
Ten thousand Phrygians ! — if I needs must die,  
Yet will I die with glory ; — if I live,  
The praise which I have gained will yet remain.”

Probably it was the contrast between these expressions of determination, common enough in the tragedies, and the frivolity of the general tone of the satyric plays, that gave the audience especial delight. The Cyclops enters, hungry for his dinner, and the satyrs wait upon him with amusing servility; suddenly he descries the newly-landed Greeks and the provisions that had been set aside for them; and he fancies that they are thieves. He sees that the face of Silenus is red, and he takes it for granted that he has been beaten. Silenus does not disabuse him, and Cyclops announces his determination to eat them:

"Nay, haste, and place in order quickly  
The cooking knives, and heap upon the hearth,  
And kindle it, a great faggot of wood —  
As soon as they are slaughtered, they shall fill  
My belly, broiling warm from the live coals,  
Or boiled and seethed within the bubbling caldron.  
I am quite sick of the wild mountain game,  
Of stags and lions I have gorged enough,  
And I grow hungry for the flesh of men."

At this statement Odysseus interrupts the monster and Silenus who is encouraging these cannibalistic tastes. The wily Greek in vain assures Polyphemus that Silenus gave him the things. He is not believed, any more than is the chorus who in vain assert the truth. Odysseus further goes on to explain that he was returning from Troy, but this is only an additional argument to him in favor of exterminating such base men, whom he bids get into the cave to be cooked. Odysseus breaks out:

"Ai! ai! I have escaped the Trojan toils,  
I have escaped the sea, and now I fall  
Under the cruel grasp of one impious man.  
O Pallas, mistress, Goddess, sprung from Jove,  
Now, now, assist me! Mightier toils than  
Troy  
Are these; — I totter on the chasms of peril."

After a grim song of the chorus, in which the monster's cannibalism is most grimly and minutely described, Odysseus comes forth from the cave and narrates the terrors he has just



ODYSSEUS OFFERING CYCLOPS WINE.

seen within, where he had beheld his comrades devoured; and "a divine thought" had occurred to him: to fill the Cyclops with wine.

He tells the satyrs of his further intentions to blind the ogre with a glowing shaft, a plan which the chorus hear with rapture. Then Odysseus goes back into the cave in order to share the danger with his companions. Soon Polyphemus comes forth,

"With the young feast oversated  
Like a merchant's vessel freighted  
To the water's edge, my crop  
Is laden to the gullet's top.  
The fresh meadow grass of spring  
Tempts me forth thus wandering  
To my brothers on the mountains,  
Who shall share the wine's sweet fountains,  
Bring the cask, O stranger, bring!"

As he sings before he lies down on the grass to continue his revels, Odysseus manages him with characteristic craft, dissuading him from assembling his brothers, and plying him with the strong wine. When Cyclops asks Odysseus his name the answer is:

"My name is Nobody. What favor now  
Shall I receive to praise you at your hands?"

Cyclops promises that he shall be the last to be eaten, and meanwhile he continues his debauch. When the monster has fallen asleep preparations are made for blinding him. Here occurs an unexpected turn: the satyrs, who have been forever bragging of their bravery, suddenly lose heart and proffer feeble excuses when Odysseus asks them to seize the great stake:

"We are too far;  
We cannot at this distance from the door  
Thrust fire into his eye,"

sings one semi-chorus, and the other:

"And we just now  
Have become lame; cannot move hand or foot."

The chorus goes on:

"The same thing has occurred to us,— our ancles  
Are sprained with standing here, I know not how."

Odysseus asks:

"What, sprained with standing still?"

CHORUS.

"And there is dust

Or ashes in our eyes, I know not whence.

OD. Cowardly dogs! ye will not aid me then?

CHO. With pitying my own back and my backbone,  
And with not wishing all my teeth knocked out,



This cowardice comes of itself — but stay,  
 I know a famous Orphic incantation  
 To make the brand stick of its own accord  
 Into the skull of this one-eyed son of earth."

Once more, it will be noticed, Euripides sneers at current superstitions, and Odysseus can do no more than call on them to sing inspiring words, which they do, and the stake is plunged in the eye of Polyphemus. Thereupon there is great uproar; the poor Cyclops roars and groans; when the chorus ask if he fell into the fire when he was drunk, he says *nobody* blinded him, and he hurls himself about to catch his persecutors, misled by the words of the jeering chorus. Odysseus finally tells him his real name, and the play ends with these words:

- OD.        "I bid thee weep — consider what I say,  
               I go towards the shore to drive my ship  
               To mine own land, o'er the Sicilian wave.  
 CYC.       Not so, if whelming you with this huge stone  
               I can crush you and all your men together;  
               I will descend upon the shore, though blind,  
               Groping my way adown the steep ravine.  
 CHO.       And we, the shipmates of Ulysses now,  
               Will serve our Bacchus all our happy lives."

These last words were probably the customary ending of these satyric plays which preserved the old worship of Dionysus. The humor is, doubtless, simple to our taste, but then we can not understand how very many implications of amusement may have lain hidden in the traditional reputation of the satyrs that their appearance and cowardliness called forth. Every conventional jest or jester has a certain authority from association, just as certain opposite objects invariably evoke gloom. Thus the clown in the circus does not always depend on the novelty of his witticisms for his success, and the satyrs were similar licensed merry-makers on whom no restraints were thrown. The whole question of the Greek humor belongs more properly, however, to the discussion of the Greek comedy.

Before leaving Euripides it is necessary to mention the Rhesus, a play always printed in the works of Euripides, although its authorship is distinctly a matter of uncertainty. Among those to whom it has been variously assigned are the younger Euripides, the nephew of the poet; Sophocles; an imitator of Æschylus; an unknown literary forger who fed the hungry Alexandrian market; and an equally unknown writer who anticipated the current fashion by writing for the closet instead of the stage; choice between these and the alleged writer is difficult. The opinion is, at least, common among scholars that the play can not be ascribed with any positiveness to Euripides. The

subject is taken from the tenth book of the *Iliad*, which describes how the Greeks sent forth Odysseus and Diomed to examine the Trojan camp at the same time that Dolon came forth for a similar purpose from the other side. Dolon is slain, but before his death he makes some statements that are of great service to the Greeks. The result is that an attack is made on the band of Rhesus, a young Thracian who has just joined the Trojan army, and he is slain. Whoever wrote it, the play lacks the qualities that are to be found elsewhere in the work of Euripides, and it bears more frequent marks of study of the *Iliad* than any other tragedy that has reached us.

Abundant fragments of other plays of Euripides have come down to us, and in Aristophanes there are many traces of his denunciation of tragedies that have not survived. Thus a Peleus is ridiculed in the comedian's *Clouds*. Mention is made elsewhere of an *Œdipus* and an *Antigone*. In the first of these the old king did not blind himself, as in the play of Sophocles, but his eyes were put out by the servants of Laius; and the *Antigone* received a joyful termination: the heroine, after her brother's burial, is led away to death by command of Creon, but she is rescued by Hæmon, and the play ends, like a modern novel, with their marriage. All the tragedians supplied material for quotation which was freely practiced in later days, and these extracts often give us lines of great beauty; those from Euripides, as Mr. Symonds has pointed out, lose least by being separated from the context, for his aim was less the artistic whole than beauty of the separate parts. Of some of the plays, too, we have fuller accounts than we possess of the work of certain other tragedians whose names and reputations are frequently mentioned.

In Mr. Symonds's "*Studies of the Greek Poets*," vol. ii., is a chapter on the fragments of *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*, where the reader will find numerous beautiful translations. Here is one from the *Dictys* of *Euripides*:

"Think'st thou that Death will heed thy tears at all,  
Or send thy son back, if thou wilt but groan?  
Nay, cease; and, gazing at thy neighbor's grief,  
Grow calm: if thou wilt take the pains to reckon  
How many have toiled out their lives in bonds,  
How many wear to old age, robbed of children,  
And all who from the tyrant's height of glory,  
Have sunk to nothing. These things shouldst thou heed."

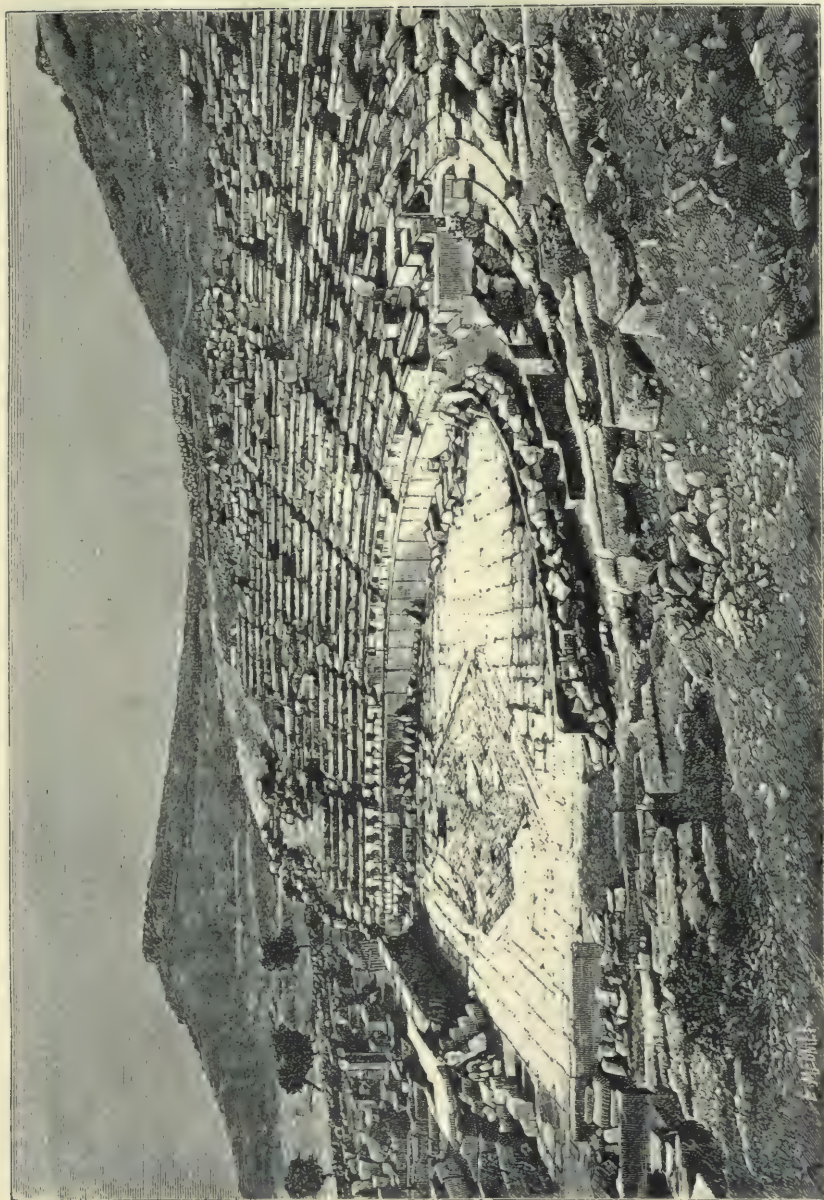
## VI.

Of the later tragedians little is known except their names. Ion of Chios, who was young when *Æschylus* was writing, and *Achæus* of

Eretria, a few years the junior of Sophocles, were assigned places little inferior to that which Æschylus held. The sons of Æschylus, Bion and Euphorion, and his nephew, Philocles, long held an important position, in good measure because the family enjoyed the right of bringing out the plays of their illustrious ancestor. It was as if the family retained the copyright, or stage-right, of his plays. Of Philocles we know that he won the first prize over Sophocles with his King Œdipus, and, to counterbalance this, that he was ridiculed by Aristophanes. His son, Morsimos, and his grandson, Astydamas, acquired some reputation as writers of tragedies; this Astydamas was also the father of two tragic poets. The fame of Ion of Chios was, however, much greater; he studied philosophy and rhetoric, and his first appearance as a tragedian was in the year 452 B.C. and we hear of him again as a competitor with Euripides and Iophon in 428 B.C. These meagre incidents, with the exception of the fact that his poetical composition was affected by his rhetorical studies, are about all that we know. Of Achæus even less can be said. A fragment of Neophron's *Medea* has been given above. Theognis is called by Aristophanes a cold poet, a fame to which annihilation would have been preferable. Morychos had an even more unfavorable renown: *stupider than Morychos* was a familiar and decisive phrase. Carcinus and his descendants are embalmed in the plays of Aristophanes as examples of incompetence, but of course that comedian is not an unbiassed witness. Nothippus, Sthenelus, Melanthius, Pythangelus, Meletus, are but names without an echo. Of their contemporaries Agathon has found him distinctly an object of modern curiosity. He is supposed to have been born about 447 B.C., and his first dramatic victory, as well as his first appearance as a tragic writer, took place in 416 B.C. The scene of the Symposium of Plato is the supper-party given to celebrate this success. Like Euripides, Agathon visited Macedonia. The names of only five of his plays are known, but we have distinct information with regard to the grace and tenderness of his style. Doubtless, he followed the fashion of which Euripides was regarded as a representative, and carried further the modern refinements and delicacies. Of Iophon and Ariston, the sons of Sophocles, and his grandson, Sophocles, scarcely more than the names survive. Iophon, however, was highly regarded.

Later tragedians were numerous who followed with diminishing force the fashions that once had flourished, and, doubtless, carried them to the inevitable extreme. Such were Dicaeogenes, Antiphon, Cleophon, Chaeremon, Diogenes, the later Carcinus and Xenocles, Theodictes, Aphareus, etc. Of Cleophon we know only that in his eleven plays, or in some of them at least, he turned his attention to every-day life,





THEATRE OF DIONYSUS AT ATHENS.

which he represented with realistic language, thus, doubtless, forming a connecting link between the later tragedy and the new comedy. While the Greek tragedy was thus fading out of existence in Athens, its influence was spreading throughout Greece and the neighboring countries, especially in Asia. We have already seen that Euripides and Agathon visited Macedonia; later Philip and Alexander showed their fondness for the theater, and their successors had the same taste. Alexander, it will be remembered, had three thousand comedians brought from Greece to celebrate the funeral games in honor of Hephæstion. In Egypt, at the court of the Ptolemies, the stage was highly honored. Even into Judea this taste made its way: Herod had two theaters built there, one in Cæsarea, and the other in Jerusalem. The anecdote quoted above, in the account of the Bacchæ, concerning the incident that took place after the defeat of Crassus, shows how general was the influence of the Greek stage. Later we shall see its great influence in Rome, and indeed this extended throughout the civilized world. The Sanskrit drama was in part indebted to the influence of that of Greece, knowledge of which was carried to India by the army of Alexander, besides spreading from simpler causes; and possibly, through India, it called forth the Chinese drama. And the fathers of the church saw the masterpieces of tragedy and comedy still performed.

That the work of the other tragedians has disappeared so utterly from the face of the earth may be readily explained. Their work was held, and, doubtless, with justice, to be inferior to that of the three great men we have been studying, and the taste of the Alexandrines exercised absolute exclusion of all work that was held to be but second-class, and when we remember that what has left has survived the ruin of two civilizations we need not wonder that so much has been lost. As Mr. Symonds puts it in his "Studies on the Greek Poets," ii. 117:

"What the public voice of the Athenians had approved the scholiasts of Alexandria winnowed. What the Alexandrians selected found its way to Rome. What the Roman grammarians sanctioned was carried in the dotage of culture to Byzantium. At each transition the peril by land and sea to rare codices, sometimes, probably, to unique autographs, was incalculable. Then followed the fury of iconoclasts and fanatics, the firebrands of Omar, the remorseless crusade of churchmen against paganism, and the then great conflagrations of Byzantium."

It is, indeed, not strange that in so many cases only names have reached us. These, at least, serve to show us how vast was the bulk of the Greek civilization, and the extent of its influence is even more remarkable.



What most thoroughly survived these many vicissitudes was the influence of Euripides, who stood then as he stands now, as the representative of the disintegration of the Greek thought. The greatness of Æschylus and Sophocles was fully acknowledged, but Euripides had the tone of modernness; he spoke to his hearers and later spectators and readers their own language, while the qualities of his predecessors, although they commanded admiration, were yet remote, as the language and inspiration of Shakspeare and Milton are remote from us. The prevalence of his authority is indirect proof of the fact, which is sufficiently established by history, that the whole course of the modification of Greek thought follows the lines on which it began in his time; it was a perpetual inquiry concerning men's relations to the gods and to one another which accompanied the continuous weakening of the old beliefs. The natural and well-founded pride of the Greeks in their intellectual superiority over their Macedonian and Roman masters helped to keep them faithful to the literary traditions of their prime, and in the confidants of the classical Italian and French tragedies we see a survival, or petrification, of the old Greek methods which forbade the use of unexpected incident or violent action as a means of arousing interest. The whole attention was devoted exclusively to the treatment, a custom which has also prevailed in French novels. The comedy of Greece, at least when it was in the hands of Aristophanes, knew no such law; later, the authority of Euripides and the death of its political influence enforced a similar monotony. It became a work of art when it ceased to be an expression of political interest, and as such was subject to this artistic law of universal extent among the Greeks, as we shall see again in the study of their oratory.

It is perhaps scarcely worth while to insist on another point that suggests itself; for although, in the absence of full information, every detail that has reached us is of interest and value, it is very easy to regard trifles as more important than they really are, yet it is curious to notice that, according to Athenæus, Euripides was one of the first of the Greeks to own a large library, and in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes (l. 1409) we find another reference to his books, when Æschylus consents to have them all thrown into the scale along with Euripides himself, his wife, children, and his friend and counsellor, Cephisophon, confident that he will outweigh this feathery load with two of his own verses. There is no doubt, then, that we have in Euripides the first great poet who was a reader, and among his many anticipations of modern tastes this may deserve to be counted. Certainly, a Greek who read at this time was pointing the way for his descendants; for, when the active life of that race ceased, it at once began to expound what had been done in the past.



## CHAPTER VI.—THE COMEDY.

I.—Obscurity of its Early History ; its Alleged Origins, in the Dionysiac Festivals, and in Various Places, as in Sicily, Among the Megarians, etc.—The Early Writers of Comedy. II.—Aristophanes—Comedy as he Found it ; its Technical Laws ; the Chorus, etc.—The *Acharnians*—The Seriousness of All the Comedies ; Their Conservatism—The *Horse-play*. III.—The *Knights* ; its Attack on Cleon, and General Political Fervor. IV.—The *Clouds*, with its Derision of Socrates, and of Modern Tendencies. V.—The *Wasps*, and its Denunciation of Civic Decay. VI.—The *Peace*, and its Political Implications—The Poetical Side of Aristophanes. VII.—The *Birds*. VIII.—The *Lysistrata*, and the *Thesmophoriazusæ*—The Attack on Euripides Directly, and Indirectly on Current Affairs—Hopelessness of the Position held by Aristophanes. IX.—The *Frogs* ; Euripides Again Assaulted, and *Æschylus* Exalted. X.—The *Ecclesiazusæ*, and the *Plutus*—The Altered Conditions—The Unliterary Quality of Attic Comedy in its Early Days—Importance of Aristophanes as a Mouth-piece of the Athenian People. XI.—The Later Development of Comedy—Philemon and Menander ; the Contrast between their Work and that of Aristophanes—Its Relation to the Later Times.

### I.

THE early history of the Greek comedy is quite as obscure as that of the tragedy ; indeed, our knowledge of it is even more limited, for only seven plays of a single comic writer have been preserved out of which we may form our notion of the nature of this great division of Greek literature. To the Greeks themselves the investigation of the beginning of literary forms was vastly less important than the study of acknowledged masterpieces. Moreover, the long period in which the comic poetry held an ignoble position as a gross amusement of ignorant rustics that only slowly developed into a recognized branch of literary work, is a satisfactory excuse for their indifference to the remote beginnings. A race that has grown up without an important admixture of foreign influence has certainly less impulse to study its own past than have those that have deliberately imitated antiquity at almost every step that they have taken. Science, too, would condemn its own lessons if it failed to remember that its limitless curiosity is of only very recent growth.

While the tragedy always maintained the dignity of its serious religious significance, and celebrated those ancient myths that told over the painful conflict of heroic strength against indomitable powers, the comedy for a long time existed as a mere rustic sport of wine-

gatherers who celebrated the joyous side of their divinity. Far from finding a complicated literary form like the dithyramb to give it standing, it developed out of the coarse songs which sounded the fructifying powers of nature, and these were celebrated with all the



THALIA.  
(*The Muse of Comedy.*)

frankness and boldness of a half-civilized race whose religion was simple nature-worship, and who at no period of their history were under the dominion of what they would have called prudery had the quality existed. It is in respect of this trait that the chasm between

antiquity and modern times is widest, and a full description of the license of the Dionysiac festivities. They can only be equalled at the present day by what we read of some of the rites of savage nations. In Greece, however, this spirit was combined with an intellectual vivacity that retained this direct combination of thought, impulse and action to an extent that we can scarcely understand now. It was among the Dorians that these sports flourished most freely, and that comedy first appeared, although they never raised it to the highest literary excellence. The Megarians were the first to lend to the song scurrility and the quality of personal and political satire; and possibly their lack of an outlet in political life concentrated their attention in this direction. They, apparently, inserted into the Dionysiac song various references to current events, and in all the early comedy of the Dorians we find the comic art employed in caricaturing the interests and manners of every-day life. This was at least the characteristic of the humble comedy that existed among the Spartans. Something of the sort seems to have been carried to Sicily. Although Æschylus visited the court of Hiero, it appears that the Sicilians at the time of the Peloponnesian war could have had but little definite knowledge of the growth of the Attic drama than such as they saw in the rendering of his plays, because at the end of Plutarch's life of Nicias we read that some of the survivors of the unfortunate Sicilian expedition "owed their preservation to Euripides. Of all the Grecians, his was the muse whom the Sicilians were most in love with. From every stranger that landed in their island they gleaned every small specimen or portion of his works, and communicated it with pleasure to each other. It is said that, on this occasion, a number of Athenians, upon their return home, went to Euripides and thanked him in the most respectful manner for their obligations to his pen, some having been enfranchised for teaching their masters what they remembered of his poems, and others having got refreshments when they were wandering about, after the battle, by singing a few of his verses. Nor is this to be wondered at, since they tell us that when a ship from Caunus, which happened to be pursued by pirates, was going to take shelter in one of their ports, the Sicilians at first refused to admit her; upon asking the crew whether they knew any of the verses of Euripides, and being answered in the affirmative, they received both them and their vessel."

These statements attest not only a most intelligent curiosity but also the difficulties of gratifying it, and when Plato recommended the *Clouds* of Aristophanes to Dionysius, that play could not have been familiar even to the ruler of Syracuse. In so complete isolation, something very different from the Attic comedy might well have grown up,



and in the plays of Epicharmus there was probably a spirit very unlike that which has immortalized Aristophanes. For a long time the Doric comedy had prevailed in Sicily, which had been colonized mainly by Dorians. Selinus, a member of a Megarian colony, Aristoxenes (about 660 B.C.), Antheas (about 596), are the names of these early poets who made use of the license of the Dionysiac festivals for more or less formal expression of satire and personal abuse or caricature, but it was in the hands of Epicharmus that the Sicilian comedy at last assumed its definite shape. In his early years he went to Sicily with his father, and finally established himself in Syracuse, where his talents were encouraged by the patronage of the tyrants Gelon and Hiero. His philosophical studies were quite as celebrated as his comedies, but it is these alone that concern us now. None of them have reached us, but their fame in antiquity was great enough to secure for their author a place among the brief list of the greatest writers of comedies. Plato



PARODY OF THE ANTIGONE.  
(Vase Painting).

set him at the head of all, and another writer mentioned him with Orpheus, Hesiod, Chœrilus, and Homer, as the greatest of the Hellenic poets. Plautus chose him for his model, and Cicero admired his wit and apt invention. He is said to have left fifty-two plays; other authorities mention thirty-five or thirty-seven, and apparently they were written with considerable literary art. The refinement of the Syracusan court, when Pindar and Æschylus, his contemporaries, were welcome and admiring guests, is a fair guarantee of the equivalent value of his skill. His subjects were frequently taken from the familiar myths and legends, and it may be conjectured that Epicharmus neglected no opportunities to set in a ridiculous light what other poets had recorded seriously. Thus, in the *Busiris*, Heracles appeared as an insatiable glutton; in a number of the plays the Homeric myths were caricatured; in *Pyrrha* and *Prometheus* the

traditional flood and the creation of mankind is the subject. In other plays he appears to have chosen ridiculous characters and scenes out of every-day life, and it was possibly here that Plautus imitated him.

Among those who followed in his footsteps was his son or pupil Dinolochus, and Phormus, the tutor of Gelon's children, but soon the Sicilian comedy died out, and was succeeded by a new form called *mimes*. These lacked the formal construction of the kind just mentioned, and consisted merely of farcical presentations of absurd incidents of common life. Sophron, a native of Syracuse, was the best known writer of these light compositions. He was a contemporary of Sophocles and Euripides. Besides the farcical *mimes*, he composed serious ones; but in both the realism and lack of formality were the striking qualities. They were both inspired by the distinct mimetic skill of the Sicilians; indeed their quick-witted conversational flavor is said by Aristotle to have exerted a direct influence on the growth of the Socratic dialogue of Plato, who learned to know them when in Syracuse, and carried them to Athens, where he studied them carefully. An example of one of these is to be found in one of the idyls of Theocritus, under whose works it will be studied later, when it will be seen how vivid is the breath of fresh air that it carries into another form of literature.

Returning to Attica we find that the earliest trace of comedy here, as elsewhere in the Hellenic world, is to be traced back to Megara, for it was an inhabitant of that city who, in 578 B.C., introduced comic choruses into Icaria, the oldest seat in Attica of the worship of Dionysus. The Bacchic *comos*, or merrymaking, from which comedy gets its name, was doubtless much older. What Susarion did was to introduce such personal and political references as to mould them into something like dramatic form, though yet very far from any thing like theatrical effect. Whatever may have been the degree of excellence attained by these crude beginnings, into which, probably, the general lyrical superiority of the people brought considerable literary refinement, no great steps were taken for a long time. The political conditions did not encourage unbridled license until Athens became democratic and satire became a common property. These attempts possibly went but little further than the work of the Megarian Mæson, whose special disguise was that of a cook or scullion, which he presented with such skill that his name became the common title of these people in Athens. The Italian *commedia dell' arte* is the nearest approach that we find in modern literature to this sort of typical dramatic effect attained by actors who caricatured certain familiar types. In fact, however, this comedy produced no important results, and a Megarian jest was for antiquity a by-word like Scotch humor in these later days.



For the eighty years after Susarion lived there are no traces of comedy in Attica, but in 487 B.C., three years after Marathon, when Æschylus was laying the foundation of his fame, we hear of Chionides, Euetes, Euxenides, Myllus, and Magnes, all contemporaries of Epicharmus. Of these only the first and last named had even in antiquity any literary prominence, and but little is known of their work; but it is easy and, doubtless, right to suppose that the vulgar humor of the Megarian comedy found less commendations among the swiftly ripening Athenians than among less cultivated people, and that the general swift intellectual advance of that city carried with it the improvement of the comedy. After all, comedy and tragedy are but different sides of the same shield, and when one side is held aloft the other can not be left behind. The delight of the Athenians in the tragedies of Æschylus naturally raised the tone of every sort of dramatic performance, and comedy improved, as in the Renaissance it improved simultaneously with modern tragedy; in each case, of course, preserving marks of its origin. The titles of some of the plays of Magnes make it clear that Aristophanes had him in mind when composing his comedies; for example, the *Frogs*, *Birds*, and *Gadflies*. Magnes won the first prize in the contest of comedies no less than eleven times, but he was soon lost sight of in admiration for the work of his more brilliant successors. There were many others who won the glorious obscurity of leaving their names in the list of forgotten Greek comedians. Of these forty immortals one or two—is not that the usual average?—have left more than their names for the information of posterity. Among these is Cratinus, who holds to the Attic comedy the same position that Æschylus held to the tragedy, although he was, in fact, a contemporary of Sophocles and Euripides, and, surviving to the great age of ninety-seven, was a frequent rival of Aristophanes, over whom he was victorious with his *Winebottle*, his latest work, for he died in 423 B.C. or 422 B.C. He was aroused to the composition of this last play by a violent assault which Aristophanes made upon him in his *Knights*, possibly under the influence of that feeling with which the men of every generation regard their immediate predecessors. Moreover, as we shall see, the Attic comedy was always marked by extravagant license of personal abuse. Cratinus himself won a reputation for violence in this respect, but he has a more honorable claim to mention as the man who gave artistic completeness to the early simple comedy.

Another important man is Crates, whose first appearance as a writer of comedies was in 449 B.C.; he had previously learned from experience as an actor what was needed on the stage, and he brought out a number of comedies in which he seems to have eschewed the personal satire



that Cratinus had freely employed, notably against Pericles, and to have chosen incidents from private rather than from public life for his subjects. Pherecrates, a contemporary of Aristophanes, appears to have followed Crates in this respect. Eupolis, born 446 B.C., was for some time a friend of Aristophanes, and his fellow-worker in the task of enforcing upon the Athenian public serious ethical and political lessons. These he conveyed with literary art and grace.

## II.

Yet of the whole Attic comedy but eleven plays have been left, and these are all the work of Aristophanes, the acknowledged master of this form of composition. It was in the year 427 B.C. that this writer first presented himself to the Athenian public, under another name, out of diffidence, or, perhaps, out of compliance with a law that forbade the writing of comedies to men under a certain age. Very soon he acquired fame by his wit and boldness in attacking the leaders of the people, and his comedies followed one another in swift succession. His last appearance was in 388 B.C. Of the facts of his life, it will be noticed, but little is known. The examination of his plays will serve to indicate his aim and method, but before studying these it will be well to examine the formal condition of the Athenian comedy at this time. Remembering that it grew from the license of the Dionysiac festivals and their opportunity for wantonness and scurrility, we shall not be surprised to find traces, and more than traces, of these qualities in the ripe and perfected work of later times. All serious poetry bears the mark of its religious origin in its liturgical rhythms and choice of words, to say nothing of its subjects, and these consequences of its remote beginning survive even in late days in the frequent aristocratic aversion of poetry to treat other than certain formal themes. This is possibly truer of modern than of ancient times. The religious origin of the art of painting is still an obstacle to its intelligent growth so long as the public demand from it, not the play of light and shade, but an indefinable something which remains vague even when it is called soul. Struggle as we may, the highest flight of the imagination is nothing more than an impressive arrangement of familiar details, and no artist can do more than choose among acknowledged facts. When the Greek tragedians, or Shakspeare, or Homer, move us, they do it by the intelligent handling of familiar material; yet, in literature and the arts, we find that the religious significance, that is to say, an impossible mystery, is often expected. Fortunately, comedy escaped this handicapping. It remained a profane weapon for the denunciation of

absurdities; and since new thoughts are tolerably sure to appear absurd to those who do not share them, it became a recognized organ of conservatism. The steps by which the satyric chorus developed into an important part of the comedy are obscure, but the importance of the chorus survived in, at least, one peculiarity of the comedy, the parabasis (or going aside, digression), which followed the exposition of the play, or prologue. In this parabasis the poet was able through the chorus to address the public face to face; he could explain his intentions, offer any apology or defense that he thought necessary. The chorus, which previously had stood on the stage to take part in the play as an actor, would step down into the orchestra, nearer the specta-



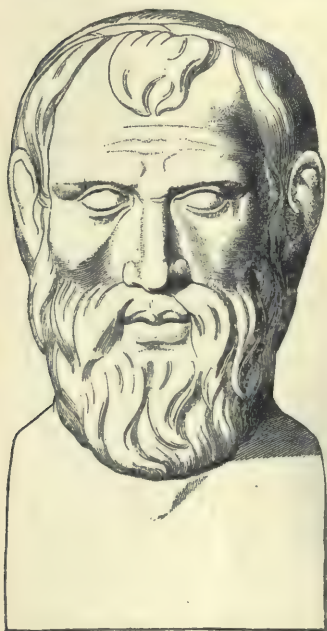
FIGURES IN COMEDY.

tors, and utter the parabasis. This division of the play consisted, when complete, of distinct parts as formal as all Greek lyric verse, in which invocations to the gods or in defense of the state or city are accompanied with political advice or warning. In the later plays it lost its force, and was succeeded by simpler lyric passages. Gradually, as we shall see, the value of the chorus evaporated away. The other lyrical portions of the chorus bore no special names. These were generally devoted to ridicule of various persons, generally such as had no connection with the play. They were accompanied with music and dance. The dance of the comedies was the cordax, a licentious performance, inherited from the earlier rites. Aristophanes condemned it, but,



nevertheless, at times, he employed something very like it. Other dances were also put on the stage by him, although these were possibly of a less free nature.

The chorus consisted of twenty-four persons, and the expenses of preparing it were borne by the city, as was the case with the tragedy. The masks which they wore were naturally different, at least so far as the expression was concerned, from those worn by the tragic actors. Different ages and professions were distinguished by various conventional attributes, and prominent people had their personal appearance caricatured when the play required it. In those plays in which birds or wasps appeared as characters the mask became a very important



ARISTOPHANES.

part of the disguise, probably surviving from the animal masks used by many savage races. Their costumes were in ordinary cases probably like those of ordinary citizens, but, doubtless, were variously modified when extraordinary circumstances in the play required a change. In a word, all the resources of the theater were continually employed to produce a vivid and life-like impression. The stage-effects appear to have been simple. But what is lost in the lapse of time in the setting of the play on the stage is even less than is lost in every translation of Aristophanes. The delicacy and vivacity of his dialogue and the abundant splendor of his lyrical interludes receive but scant justice in even the best English versions.

The whole number of the plays of Aristophanes was about forty, for authorities vary as to the exact list. Of these, as has been said, eleven survive in a complete form, and of the rest more than seven hundred fragments give us vivid instances of his boundless wit and invention, though but vague notions of the lost plots. Fortunately, the plays cover his long career, from 425 B.C., three years after his first appearance, to 388 B.C., the date when he brought out his last play, so that we can see many of the variations in his method; but there are, of course, plays missing that scholars would very gladly regain, such as those in which he handled tragic myths.

The earliest of those that survive is the *Acharnians*, 425 B.C., the third piece that Aristophanes produced, but the earliest to win the first prize.



It is a political piece, not only full of allusions to contemporary events, but depending for its main interest on the state of the Peloponnesian war that was now in its sixth year. Thus the comedy has an interest for us and a deep significance wholly beside its humorous effect. Indeed, while every work of art is the resultant of all the forces that work upon the mind of the artist, we find in the comedy an immediate presentation of scenes such as is found only with more difficulty in the tragedy. The comic writer is necessarily near life. A jest that can only be understood after it is explained by commentators loses its right to that name, and to the Athenians the writings of Aristophanes had a vividness that was its most striking quality. With time, of course, much of this is lost, but enough remains to justify the high praise that he received. We shall see how grave after all is the comedian's work; behind the laughing mask is an active, serious brain that is grappling with momentous questions; the comicality is, as it were, a literary quality, like eloquence, for the more striking enforcement of solemn truths. Always humor stands in relief against the tragic intensity of life; it continually implies a reference to what we know is not amusing. It counts by its suggestions of what is left unsaid.

A noticeable thing is this, that in the hands of Aristophanes comedy was employed as a buttress of society, as a defender of the old traditions which we have seen attacked and exposed by Euripides, although it is commonly held that wit is a corrosive that eats only into venerable absurdities. Yet, as often as not, it is a conservative force, especially when the attack on society is made by fanatics whose earnestness and enthusiasm present a ludicrous side. This was the position of Voltaire in his treatment of Rousseau, as well as of Aristophanes, and if ridicule killed, its victims would have been long since forgotten; on the other hand, Erasmus, Rabelais, and Heine were prominent among those who helped to bring about a change by the application of their wit to contemporary affairs, so that it appears impossible to make any general statement as to the side on which the wits shall enlist. Like every one else, they decide that for themselves, and every quality may be found on both sides of the continual controversy between conservatism and radicalism that forever agitates the world. When even wealth and position fail to secure men's loyalty to tradition, how can intelligence be expected to count?

Yet nowhere do we find greater conservatism than in the apparatus of humor and ridicule; even coronations are tainted with modernness by the side of the machinery of comedy. We detect this antiquity not only in the mouldy jests that have come down to us from the flint period, but in the painted cheeks of the circus clown, who probably represents the survival of an earlier civilization than any to be observed

elsewhere in the community, and in the fool's cap that still lingers in the schoolroom for the correction of careless boys. Punch himself, the fantastic figure of fun that we see every week, carries us back by his uniform to a very remote past. Aristophanes shows us the venerable forms of what was already antiquity in the allegorical personifications that crowd his pages, and in the conventional merry-making of his plays, his drastic rendering of old jokes by living beings who act them out. The tragedy outgrew its inheritance from older times in its swift development from Æschylus to Euripides, and became, as it were, the organ of progress, the outlet for the expression of the new thought that made its home in Athens, while the comedy retained its old forms and became a strictly conservative force, its literary method remaining the contemporary of the thought that it uttered.



GRECIAN FARMERS.

In the *Acharnians* one will find few traces of subtle work; no other play of Aristophanes is fuller of roaring horse-play than this,—horse-play tempered with corrosive satire that must have burned into some of the objects of his condemnation,—and its abundant and vivacious merriment may well serve to indicate to what an extent the old comedy was untrammelled by literary traditions. In this play the author set before his public a serious thought, but he clothed it in a form which is neither comedy nor farce, as we understand those words, but rather with bubbling, over-running freedom and extravagance and the most lavish invention. The subject is a denunciation of the Peloponnesian war, which had been raging for five years and had done great mischief to the regions lying outside of Athens. The Athenians maintained their courage in spite of all their reverses; a few years earlier the



plague had raged in the over-crowded city and carried away Pericles, who had been succeeded by the demagogue Cleon. Yet, it was against the military spirit that Aristophanes made bold to speak, and in selecting the Acharnians he chose the most vigorous supporters of the war as the object of his satire. The suburb in which they lived lay about eight miles from Athens, and every year it had been exposed to the ravages of the enemy; but their spirit was unbroken, and these charcoal burners (for preparing charcoal was their main occupation), formed a large part of the military contingent. The leading character Dicæopolis, or good citizen, is a farmer who has been driven from the country to seek protection within the walls of the city, and is anxious for the restoration of peace. At the opening of the play he is found sitting in the Pnyx, where the citizens are accustomed to hold their public meetings, and there he waits for them to assemble. Meanwhile, he recounts his joys and sorrows, and the dramatist's tongue begins its lashing:

"How oft have I been vexed to the very soul!  
 How seldom had a treat! A brace, perhaps;  
 Two brace, at most — and then my disappointments —  
 Oh, they were millions, billions, — sea-sand-illions.  
 Come, then: What did I really enjoy?  
 Yes: one sight fill'd my soul with delectation,  
 Cleon disgorging those five talents. Ah,  
 How I enjoy'd it! How I love the Knights  
 Still for that deed, one worthy Hellas thanks.  
 But then, *per contra* stands that stage surprise  
 Most shocking, when I sat with mouth agape  
 Waiting for Æschylus, and the crier called —  
 'Theognis, bring your chorus on'; just fancy  
 The shock it gave me."

Here we have the earliest extant reference of Aristophanes to Cleon, between whom waged bitter strife, and the scratch at the frigid tragedies of Theognis, but these are only introductory to the complaint of the hero over the dilatoriness of the citizens, and especially of the presidents, who only come in at the last minute:

"Pushing and crushing  
 To get at the best seats, like streams they roll on!  
 For peace they never care."

Dicæopolis, however, has chosen a good place from which he can howl down all those who shall speak of anything but peace. When the meeting is opened Amphitheus, a demi-god, announces himself with a formality parodying the tragic manner of Euripides, and asserts that the gods have given him a special license to make a peace with Sparta; he would be grateful, however, for a small contribution from



the presiding officers. He is instantly dragged away, and the Persian ambassadors appear upon the stage. Curiously enough, in a single line which they utter, later Orientalists have discovered fairly good ancient Persian, which had proved a stumbling-block to those who tried to interpret it as bad Greek. These men are represented as ridiculous creatures; their words are translated into a promise of money, and the accompanying Greeks give absurd excuses for the long time they have been absent, drawing pay. The ambassadors are invited to a public dinner, which incident gives the last touch to the wrath of Dicæopolis, so that he at once asks of Amphitheus a peace for himself and family with Sparta. Then Theorus enters to report upon his success in seeking alliance with Thrace. He brings an army on the stage that can be compared only with Falstaff's forces. Although the native troops are not paid, these worthless allies are almost engaged, when Dicæopolis breaks up the meeting and their acceptance is postponed.

Immediately Amphitheus returns, having narrowly escaped mobbing at the hands of the Acharnians, with three samples of peace in wine-jars for Dicæopolis to choose from. The five and ten years' truce he rejects, but the thirty years' truce contents him and off he goes. No sooner is he away than the chorus of Acharnians comes on, in search of the peace-loving rascal. Here the old form of the comedy survives: Dicæopolis sings a phallic hymn in praise of the joys of peace and in condemnation of the horrors of war, and then afterward he discusses with the angry chorus what he has just done. How full the humor of Aristophanes is of malicious invention may be seen from the fact that he caricatures here a play of Euripides, who, in his *Telephus*, now lost, had let one of the characters produce a royal infant whom he threatened to kill with his sword if he were not granted a hearing; Dicæopolis brings forward a coal-scuttle wrapped up in long clothes and threatens to run it through. This overwhelms the Acharnians:

"We are done for! Do not kill him! Our own demesman! Oh, forbear!  
Oh, that scuttle! Do not harm him! Spare him, we beseech thee, spare!

DIC. Bawl away, for I shall slay him. I'll not hear you, on my soul.  
CHOR. Oh, mine own familiar comrade! Oh, my noble heart of coal!

DIC. But just now you would not hear me speak a word about the peace.  
CHOR. Speak it now, and praise the Spartans to the top of your caprice!

For I never will prove traitor to my little scuttle here!"

Before getting to the argument, Dicæopolis wishes to make the most complete preparations, and for this purpose he seeks the aid of Euripides, going to his house to borrow some of the tattered garments in which that poet's heroes were accustomed to be arrayed. He asks

for one thing and another until finally he accumulates nearly all the tragedian's pathetic-properties.

He asks if Euripides is in :

- CEPH. Even so.  
His soul's abroad collecting versicles ;  
His bodily presence here play-mongering  
In a garret.
- DIC. Happy, happy, happy poet !  
Whose slave can logic chop so learnedly :  
Summon him.
- CEPH. But I could not.
- DIC. But you must.  
I will not go away : I'll keep on knocking.  
Euripides, my sweet Euripides !  
Open to me, if ever you admitted  
A mortal man. I'm Dicæopolis  
Of *Chollid* ward.
- EUR. This is no *holiday*.
- DIC. Well, bid them turn the house-front and display  
Th' interior.
- EUR. But I could not.
- DIC. But you must.
- EUR. I'll do, then, as you ask, but won't come down.
- DIC. Euripides !
- EUR. What screamest ?
- DIC. Why not write  
Down here, instead of perching in that cockloft ?  
That's why your characters go lame before  
They come to us. And what's the use of all  
These sorry weeds and stage rags ? That is why  
You put so many beggars on the stage.  
But I beseech you, for sweet pity's sake,  
Give me some rag from some old worn-out play,  
For to the Chorus I am bound to make  
A speech ; and if I fail, 'twill cost my life.
- EUR. Rags, and what rags ? Those in which Oeneus here  
Erst played, that " very feeble, fond old man " ?
- DIC. Not Oeneus, no. There was a worse than that.
- EUR. Phœnix, blind Phœnix ?
- DIC. No, not his ; there was  
A character more ragged still than Phœnix.
- EUR. What " thing of shreds and patches " would'st thou have ?  
Is it the beggar Philoctetes' rags ?
- DIC. No. Something far more beggarly than his.
- EUR. What, then ? The squalid tatters of the lame Bellerophon ?
- DIC. No, lame he was indeed,  
And used to beg, and well could wag his tongue.
- EUR. I know the one you think of : Telephus,  
The Mysian king.
- DIC. The very man.
- EUR. Here, boy !  
Bring me the tattered garb of Telephus ;  
It lies upon the Thyestean rags,  
'Twixt them and Ino's. Take them, there they are.
- DIC. O, Zeus, that lookest down on everything,  
And seest through them all, may I succeed  
In garbing me in guise most miserable.

- And since you've been so kind, Euripides,  
Lend me the other properties that go  
Along with these: I mean the Mysian cap,  
"For I this day must play the beggar here —  
Be what I am, but other far appear."  
The house must recognize me as myself —  
The Chorus standing by like fools, that I  
At the old cocks may poke my quiddities.
- EUR. Here. "Thy device is shrewd, and right thy rede."  
DIC. Oh, blessings on you; "and on Telephus —  
What's in my thoughts." Bravo, I'm getting full  
Of quibbles. But I want a beggar's staff.
- EUR. Take, then, the staff, and leave the "marble halls."  
DIC. My soul, thou seest how I'm driven forth,  
Though many properties I lack. But thou  
Be in thy begging whine importunate.  
(*To Euripides*) Lend me a basket that the lamp has burn'd  
A hole in.
- EUR. Of this wicker thing, poor wretch,  
What need hast thou?  
DIC. Need have I none, but want it.
- EUR. I tell you, you annoy me, and must go.  
DIC. Ah! may God bless you — like your blessed mother.
- EUR. Now pray be off.  
DIC. Well, give me just one thing —  
A little cup with broken rim.
- EUR. Oh, take it.  
A murrain with it! You're a bore, I tell you.
- DIC. Thou knowest not yet what mischief thou art doing.  
But, sweet Euripides, just one thing more.  
A pipkin with a hole in't, plugg'd with sponge.
- EUR. You're robbing me of all my tragic art.  
Take it and go.
- DIC. I will. And yet, how can I!  
One thing I need, and if I get it not  
I'm ruined. Listen, dear Euripides;  
If I get this I'll go and come not back: —  
Some refuse cabbage leaves to fill my basket.
- EUR. You'll ruin me: there! — now you've taken all  
My tragic genius.

With this aid Dicæopolis is able to make so moving an appeal in behalf of peace, and so effective a defense of the Spartans, that he secures the favor of half the chorus; the other half invoke the aid of the warlike Lamachus, a famous general. Lamachus vows a renewal of hostilities, while Dicæopolis offers free trade to Megara, Bœotia, and the whole Peloponnesus.

At this point comes the parabasis, in which Aristophanes directly addressed the audience and defended himself from the charge of libeling the state. Afterward the chorus complained of the way in which old servants were neglected, and the extent to which they were ill-treated in courts of law, and no contrast is greater than that between the reveling of the rest of the play and these serious addresses to the Athenians.



When the play begins again, people have begun to arrive at Dicæopolis's market in order to trade. A Megarian brings his daughters to sell as pigs, and Dicæopolis purchases them for some salt and garlic, and saves the Megarian from an informer. Then a Bœotian comes with an abundance of valuable things which he sells for one obnoxious informer, namely, Nicharchus, who threatened to denounce the stranger for bringing a wick into the city, wherewith he might have burned down the dockyard. The chorus sing a lyric in praise of peace, and then appears a herald who promises a skin of wine to



MARKET SCENE.

the most successful tippler. Dicæopolis makes his preparations, and gives to no one a taste of his precious wine except to a bride who wants a drop in order to keep her husband at home. Lamachus receives orders to go out into the snow on military service, and Dicæopolis receives an invitation to dinner; finally they both return, the general wounded and wretched, and Dicæopolis drunk and happy. Thus the advantages of peace are most vividly portrayed, for the farcical contrast between the bruised soldier and the wine-flown lover of peace gives an impressive close to the play. Its vinous flavor belongs to it as a part of the worship of Dionysus, and the final absurdity keeps it well in the region of comedy.

No one has ever worked with a broader brush than has Aristophanes in this play and the next one, the *Knights*. They are both compact with life. The humor moves in a great current that drags with it the direct inculcation of the sweetness of peace, contempt for ambitious leaders and perpetual reproof of Euripides. The play is full of lines that caricature and parody lines from his *Telephus*; a messenger comes in and mocks the long speeches of the tragic bearers of evil tidings;

the informers, a class that poisoned the political life of Athens at its roots, are denounced most bitterly. The play abounds with life; it is magnificently rich in reality, a vast outbreak of tumultuous emotion, not a mere tender stream of acid comment or ill-natured sarcasm. Only Rabelais comes so near being an elemental force.

### III.

The *Knights*, which appeared in the next year, 424 B.C., bears many marks of likeness to the *Acharnians*, and this time it is Cleon, the demagogue, who is marked for slaughter. All the earlier plays of Aristophanes had been brought out by some one else; for what reason is not known, although it has been suggested that perhaps the youth of the author stood in the way of his undertaking the task. He not only brought out this play, he also took the part of Cleon, and since no one was willing to make a mask that should represent the features of that well-known man, Aristophanes appeared without a mask, but with his face smeared with the lees of wine, after the old Bacchic custom, in such a way, however, as to suggest the man whom he was caricaturing. Nowhere is Cleon's name mentioned, possibly out of deference to some law forbidding that irreverent assault, but the attack lost none of its point by that prohibition; a joke is not injured by being hidden, and skating on thin ice always attracts attention. The play is an improvement on the *Acharnians*; Aristophanes had a single object in view, and every thing is brought to bear on that, and certainly it required much courage for a young author to attack, single-handed, the most powerful man in Athens. Cleon had made an enemy of the poet, not only by his political position, but also by trying to disprove the claims of Aristophanes to Athenian citizenship, in his wrath against the lost play, the *Babylonians*. The poet escaped legal defeat, but he maintained his grudge against the demagogue. One can not but feel an admiration for a state that permitted such absolute freedom as Athens enjoyed; no comic poet ever had half such license as abounds here. An American political contest is coldly conventional by the side of it. Witty as Aristophanes was, it will, of course, be understood that the position which he held as a fearless opponent of what he regarded as serious political errors did not depend on his personal audacity alone, for he would have been powerless if he had not expressed a wide-spread feeling, and he would not have spoken so frankly if the condition of Athens had not been one that permitted the utmost freedom of speech. Comedy existed, not as one form of literary amusement, or even as a corrective for the universal weaknesses of human



nature, but as a direct expression of the keen political interest of an eager people, and it was this quality that it possessed as an exponent of public life that gave it its importance at the time and makes it valuable to us as a record of the people speaking through their favorite mouthpiece on current events. Only in freedom can such license exist, when there are no panicky terrors about propriety or safety. Long custom secured the writer from the charge of indecorum or undue harshness, and the result is that we see in his comedies the failures, or what were considered the failures, of Athens, as we see the lofty and noble aims in the tragedies. At no time in the world's history have there been known such vividness and intensity.

The *Knights* opens with the grumbling of two distinguished generals, Nicias and Demosthenes, who are represented as slaves, over the unreasonableness of their master, Demos, in whom is personified the Athenian public, just as John Bull and Brother Jonathan respectively personify all Englishmen and all Americans. Demos has just been thrashing them when they run forth complaining and whimpering. Immediately a distinction is drawn between the two men: Demosthenes is the bolder, and Nicias is less positive, an echo of his companion, and these characteristics are maintained throughout. This is the way in which Demosthenes describes Demos, and pays his respects to Cleon, who is mentioned as the Paphlagonian. Demos, he says, is

“a man in years,  
A kind of bran-fed, husky, testy character,  
Choleric and brutal at times, and partly deaf.  
It's near about a month now, that he went  
And bought a slave out of a tanner's yard,  
A Paphlagonian born, and brought him home,  
As wicked a slanderous wretch as ever lived.  
This fellow, the Paphlagonian, has found out  
The blind side of our master's understanding,  
With fawning and wheedling in this kind of way:  
'Would not you please go to the bath, sir? surely  
It's not worth while to attend the courts to-day.'  
And, 'Would not you please to take a little refreshment?  
And there's that nice hot broth — and here's the threepence  
You left behind you — And would not you order supper?'  
Moreover, when we get things out of compliment  
As a present for our master, he contrives  
To snatch 'em and serve 'em up before our faces.  
I'd made a Spartan cake at Pylos lately,  
And mixed and kneaded it well, and watched the baking;  
But he stole round before me and served it up.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sometimes the old man falls into moods and fancies,  
Searching the prophecies till he gets bewildered;  
And then the Paphlagonian plies him up,—  
Driving him mad with oracles and predictions,  
And that's his harvest.”



The Spartan cake refers to the success of Cleon in suddenly accepting command and capturing a number of Spartans at Pylos when he was urged to make good his statement of what the generals should do. Certainly, demagogues who do what they promise can afford to endure ridicule.

Then, when Demosthenes gets hold of some wine, he finds some reports of the oracles which declare that Pericles shall have such and such successors, who shall be followed by

"a viler rascal  
In the person of a Paphlagonian tanner,  
A loud, rapacious, leather-selling ruffian."

He, in his turn, is to be superseded by a sausage-seller. Thereupon there appears a sausage-seller to whom Demosthenes communicates the words of the oracle.

Naturally the humble vendor of sausages is as much confused as elated at this swift promotion, and naturally has some doubts about his capacity.

There is nothing easier, Demosthenes assures him :

"Stick to your present practice : follow it up  
In your new calling. Mangle, mince, and mash,  
Confound and hack, and jumble things together !  
And interlard your rhetoric with lumps  
Of mawkish sweet and greasy flattery.  
Be fulsome, coarse, and bloody ! — For the rest,  
All qualities combine, all circumstances,  
To entitle and equip you for command ;  
A filthy voice, a villainous countenance,  
A vulgar birth, and parentage, and breeding.  
Nothing is wanting — absolutely nothing."

The sausage-seller still hesitates, saying :

"For all our wealthier people are alarm'd  
And terrified at him ; and the meaner sort  
In a manner stupefied, grown dull and dumb."

Demosthenes says :

"Why there's a thousand lusty cavaliers  
Ready to back you, that detest and scorn him ;  
And every worthy, well-born citizen ;  
And every candid, critical spectator ;  
And I myself ; and the help of Heaven to boot : —  
And never fear ; his face will not be seen,  
For all the manufacturers of masks,  
From cowardice, refused to model it.  
It matters not ; his person will be known :  
Our audience is a shrewd one — they can guess."

Certainly the entrance of Cleon could not be more cleverly prepared, and he comes blustering on the stage, denouncing treachery and plots, so that the sausage-seller starts to run off, but Demosthenes encourages him, and the chorus of knights appears and begins to denounce Cleon :

"Close around him, and confound him, the confounder of us all.  
Pelt him, pummel him and maul him ; rummage, ransack, overhaul him,  
Overbear him and outbawl him ; bear him down and bring him under.  
Bellow like a burst of thunder, robber ! harpy ! sink of plunder !" etc.

The choice of the knights for the chorus was most discreet, for this class represented the bitterest opposition to Cleon, and felt the strongest yearning for his overthrow and the restoration of an oligarchy in



PEDAGOGUE.



PEASANT.

which they should be powerful. Cleon had offended them by his devotion to the baser populace, and what we have already seen of the play shows that the fundamental discord is the familiar conflict between an antiquated aristocracy and a vulgar democracy. As we go on we shall see how the knights consented to overthrow their present antagonist by joining hands with a yet lower man, for political science teaches that men's actions at different periods of the world's history are apt to move in similar circles.

The chorus tell the sausage-seller that if he will outdo Cleon in impudence the victory is his, and the fight begins and rages with the excess of violence which two such blackguards would naturally exhibit when entirely free from literary conventions. There is no limit to their foul-mouthed abuse of each other. Thus:

CLEON. Dogs and villains, you shall die !  
 S. S. Ay ! I can scream ten times as high.  
 CL. I'll overbear ye, and outbawl ye.  
 S. S. But I'll outscream ye, and outsquall ye.  
 CL. I'll impeach you, whilst abroad,  
       Commanding on a foreign station.  
 S. S. I'll have you sliced, and slashed, and scored.  
 CL. Your lion's skin of reputation,  
       Shall be flay'd off your back and tanned.  
 S. S. I'll take those guts of yours in hand.  
 CL. Come bring your eyes and mine to meet !  
       And stare at me without a wink !  
 S. S. Yes ! in the market-place and street,  
       I had my birth and breeding too ;  
       And from a boy to blush or blink,  
       I scorn the thing as much as you."

And so the two exchange the compliments of Billingsgate, rolling in the mire which serves as a magazine of offensive missiles, until Cleon hurries to the Senate to make short work of his adversary with all manner of accusations.

At this point occurs the parabasis, in the more important part of which Aristophanes takes occasion to denounce Magnes, Crates, and Cratinus. His insults to Cratinus brought swift punishment, for in the next year, as has been said above, the old veteran woke up and wrote a play that won for him the first prize over the *Clouds* of Aristophanes. The poet also asks the favor of the gods and sounds the praises of the knights. When the play begins again the sausage-seller recounts how he got ahead of Cleon in securing the favor of the Senate. Cleon, it seems, had burst in with the statement that the fishermen had just landed with the largest haul of pilchards that had been known since the war began, and had proposed that they buy the fish while they were cheap. Then he moved that a general thanksgiving be proclaimed and a hundred oxen sacrificed. This was the bid of a demagogue, because it was well understood by the audience that only the thighs and fat were offered to the gods, and that all the rest fell to the poor citizens. Consequently the sausage-seller proposed a sacrifice of two hundred oxen, and so outdid Cleon. That baffled leader then proposed that the Senate delay their purchase of the fish to hear news of peace brought from Lacedæmon by a herald, but the Senate think it no time to listen to talk about peace when fish are so



cheap—a pleasing slur on Athenian politics—and they adjourn. The sausage-seller bought all the fennel in the market to present to the populace for their fish-sauce, and so won their warm gratitude. The chorus are loud in their encouragement:

“ With fair event your first essay began,  
 Betokening a predestined happy man,  
 The villain now shall meet  
     In equal war  
 A more accomplished cheat,  
     A viler far ;  
 With turns and tricks more various,  
 More artful and nefarious.  
     — But thou !  
     Bethink thee now ;  
 Rouse up thy spirit to the next endeavor !  
     — Our hands and hearts and will,  
     Both heretofore and ever  
         Are with thee still.”

The sausage-seller calls out :

“ The Paphlagonian ! Here he’s coming, foaming  
 And swelling like a breaker in the surf.  
 With his hobgoblin countenance and look ;  
 For all the world as if he would swallow me up.”

Not that Cleon was a Paphlagonian, but the word accused him of foreign birth, the charge he had brought against Aristophanes, and carried with it besides that insult—and the Paphlagonians bore an ill name—a punning allusion to his foaming, sputtering manner of speaking. Here he undertakes to browbeat the man who begins to appear like a formidable rival. He appeals to Demos himself, and it is decided that they shall settle their superiority before the people. Then there is no limit to their extravagance ; each tries to outdo the other with flattery of Demos, who is soon won by the sausage-seller’s ingenious pertinacity. Cleon in despair asks leave to get some oracles that support him, and his rival starts off to get his own, and they both return staggering under their loads. There is an amusing match between them that well illustrates the credulity of the people, and then the sausage-seller renews his bidding for the popular favor and the play ends with his unworthy triumph. The sausage-seller, or Agoracritus, according to his name, which is at last announced, makes Demos over anew by boiling him, and the Demos comes upon the stage in his rejuvenescence, determined that justice shall be done and peace made. This conclusion brings out clearly the serious meaning of the play, and the hopefulness of the conservative who sees the sole chance for the future in the glory of the past. Yet where else could

he look for it? The present, even allowing for violent exaggeration in his presentation of it, was enough to fill any one with despair.

The question of the justice of Aristophanes will be decided by every one according to his feelings, so that any final judgment is impossible. Circumstances, at least, allow us to approve the clearness of his perceptions, for the glory of Athens died from the disease which he portrayed. The vividness of his drawing needs no comment; right or wrong, his political feeling and enthusiasm have remained unequaled. The Athenians could laugh at this rendering of their infamous weakness, and yet give him the first prize, a sure test of fair-mindedness or, possibly, of cynical indifference.

Whatever the emotion by which the populace was swayed, the lines of Aristophanes, at least, show us the hot conflict that was waging between what was deemed venerable in the past and what was thought to be revolutionary in the present; and the mirror that Aristophanes held up before his audience did not offend on the side of flattery. The play shows us how great was the commotion caused by the struggle between old principles and new methods, and indeed, to leave the political questions that it invokes, we may see in its composition the curious juxtaposition of Cleon and the allegorical figure of the people, personified as Demos, which bears witness to the preservation of an earlier literary form in their most vivid application to current events. Only in Shakspeare can we find such indifference to literary by-laws, and even he did not enjoy the same absolute freedom that distinguishes Aristophanes, for whom no rules exist. The allegorical figure was, to be sure, a part of his inheritance, but the uses to which it was put must have been new, because never before had Athenian life known the intensity of its mingling glory and decay. Never were the heat and confusion of actual events so caught and set down as in his pathetic pages. While the tragedy preserves the remoteness of a ritual, the comedy is rank with life; we see Athens as we see no other city of the past. Elsewhere we may behold the court, the church, or a mass of refined people; here we see the place itself.

#### IV.

His next play, the *Clouds*, is not so easily placed. It was brought out in 423 B.C., fourteen months after the *Knights*, and is devoted to turning Socrates to contempt. It failed of success on the stage, as has been noted above, and the text which has come down to us is a modified form of that in which it originally appeared. It is uncertain whether this failure was due to its unjust treatment of the great Greek philosopher or, as has been suggested, to mere lack of interest in a remote

theme or in its presentation. The first suggestion is an unlikely one ; that the Athenian public should have been sensitive to a contemptuous treatment of Socrates, when it laughed at a much more violent attack on a trusted leader like Cleon, appears impossible. There is no good reason to suppose that Socrates was in any way popular. He was, doubtless, a man of influence among a chosen band, but even in Athens, in spite of the exaggerations of its modern admirers, a man so full of the new spirit must have held the position which a philosopher always holds in a community that is vain of its own intelligence. His death was but the natural end of a life that aroused wrath whenever it emerged from total obscurity. No play of Aristophanes has proved so unfavorable as this to the fame of its author, who has appeared to posterity as the wilful calumniator of an honorable man. It was in this light, too, that he appeared in antiquity to the friends of Socrates. Plato, in his *Apology*, states that the fatal accusation that was brought against Socrates was prepared by Aristophanes twenty-four years before. Yet, even he brings Aristophanes into his *Symposium* among the friends of Socrates, with whom he discusses the nature of love. Although Plato would have no comic writers in his ideal state, he seems to have been able to endure them in actual life and to see in Aristophanes something more than the calumniator of his friend. It is said of Socrates that he attended the performance of the *Clouds* and watched with anger the way in which he was caricatured. What these statements establish is the intelligent comprehension that these distinguished men had of the nature of the comedy, as well as their superiority to personal malice. There can be but little doubt that Aristophanes, who was a firm conservative, meant to make a violent attack upon Socrates, and that he regarded the philosopher as a foe to the state. We must not forget that Socrates was not surrounded by that atmosphere of sanctity through which posterity sees him ; he was to Aristophanes but a fellow-citizen, and a dangerous one, and there is no hatred deeper than that which men feel for those of their contemporaries whom they regard as bigoted conservatives or fantastic radicals, as the case may be.

We must also make great allowance for the form of expression which lay ready to the hand of Aristophanes. What appears to us injustice and virulence was part of the game, was a legitimate and generally understood method of attack. We see something of the same kind in our political contests, and, to a much slighter extent, in the current *badinage* between men, which is always incomprehensible to those people who are accustomed to regard even jesting as a deadly insult. What is permissible in serious or humorous reproach is always a matter of convention, and probably nowhere has there been greater freedom



than among the Greeks. Even with all allowance, it is hard to argue from our habits to the license of the old comedy; we are so accustomed to the rule of literary decorum, to a keen sense of personal dignity which could never have been understood by an ancient Greek, to an artificial etiquette, that the difference appears insurmountable. The heat of the discussions between Milton and Salmasius, or between Bentley and his foes, is nearly beyond our comprehension, how much more the scorn of Aristophanes. The comedy was yet near its beginning when license was absolutely unbridled; the utmost extravagance was its conventional language. So much was, perhaps, clear to all the men of that time, who saw and regretted that Socrates was attacked, but distinguished between that fact and the permissible exaggeration of the comedian's language.

If we grant that Aristophanes enjoyed almost perfect freedom, we must in justice confess that he did not abuse it in this play. That it gives a faithful presentation of Socrates can not be affirmed. Yet we do not turn to modern burlesques for photographic likenesses of men who are caricatured in them. The well-known Pinafore can not be the only authority consulted by the future historian of the English navy, and even the eccentricities of modern society are exaggerated in *Patience*. In the same way, to compare great things with small, Aristophanes has misrepresented Socrates. The plot of the *Clouds* is very simple. Strepsiades, a dull-witted rustic, has a son Pheidippides—a name that suggests the greater elegance of that day, as the English names of streets and apartment houses suggest the current Anglomania—who has nearly ruined his father by his extravagance. The poor old man determines to visit Socrates, to learn from that inventor of novelties how he may overreach his creditors, for Socrates was famous for confounding those who would argue with him, and bringing forth the most unexpected results. The interest which some of the philosophers took in the study of physical science is here inaccurately ascribed to Socrates and turned to ridicule. Socrates himself, after a common fashion of Aristophanes—that of representing figures of speech by concrete images—is represented as suspended in a basket above the things of this world, and the companion of the *Clouds*, who form the chorus. The accusation of blasphemy which inevitably awaits men who try to give a scientific explanation of phenomena, is brought against Socrates. Strepsiades asks what moves the clouds. Is it Zeus? "Not at all," answers the philosopher, "it is ethereal Vortex." "Vortex?" says Strepsiades. "It had escaped my notice that Zeus did not exist and that Vortex now ruled in his stead." The humor here is certainly not gross, and inasmuch as in the existing parabasis the poet apologizes for his failure to win the

prize when the play was brought out, and makes a great point of his superiority in refinement to other writers of comedies, it is not impossible that his play failed from a very different cause than that which occurs to modern commentators, and that his jests were too subtle and too free from extravagance to please an audience that delighted in a seasoning of rank wantonness. Even Strepsiades is unable to profit from the teachings of Socrates, so he sends his son to learn the modern arts. Before he appears, a discussion, not unlike that in a mediæval morality, takes place between the unjust and the just cause, personifications respectively of the new and the old manners. The young man proves an apt pupil, and when Strepsiades drives away his creditors with blows and fanciful arguments, he is himself beaten by Pheidippides, who proves conclusively that he is right, inasmuch as Strepsiades beat him when a child. Strepsiades suggests that he may thrash his boy if he should ever have one; "but," says Pheidippides, "if I should not have one, I shall have wept for nothing, and you will die laughing at me." The end of the business is that Strepsiades burns down Socrates's "thinking-shop," and nearly kills the philosopher.

Throughout the play much humor is devoted to attacks on the modern thought. Many charges are unjustly laid on Socrates; his teaching is confounded with that of the Sophists whom he detested, but the accusations of word-splitting and logic-chopping were doubtless not wholly without grounds. It is a very old-fashioned conservatism that inspired Aristophanes with the contempt that appears in the question of Strepsiades: "Do you think that Zeus always sends us new rain, or that the sun is always drawing the same water up again?" and the answer of the money-lender that he neither knows nor cares. The allusions of Strepsiades to the unholiness of interest show us that the reformers of two thousand years ago were much like those of to-day. We see, too, the father's preference for Æschylus, and his scorn for the modern taste that preferred the dubious morality of Euripides; everywhere Aristophanes strove to check the current; he saw that the real grandeur of Athens was past, and that the condition of things in his own days was almost hopeless, but the cure that he advised was simply to do the impossible thing—to go back.

## V.

The Wasps, 422 B.C., is a bold attack upon the decay of civic virtue among the author's fellow-citizens. The especial evil that Aristophanes denounced was one of growing mischief, namely, the way in which the administration of justice debauched the Athenians. The system was

a peculiar one : out of the twenty thousand, more or less, free citizens, there were always six thousand chosen by lot to form the ten tribunals before which all legal questions were brought for settlement.



OBOL WITH  
HERA HEAD.

When Solon established this custom as a part of the close connection between citizenship and civic government, the judges or jurymen—for they in fact united both functions—were not paid. The position was both a duty and a privilege, and was often neglected in order to prevent the inevitable waste of time, interruption of business, etc., which likewise in these later days seriously modify men's opinions of the advantages of trial by jury when they are so unfortunate as to be drawn to listen to tedious pleadings. To obviate this reluctance, the jurymen were paid first one obol, then two, and



ATHENIAN DEKADRACHMON.

finally three a day. The obol was a little more than a cent, and the triobolus consequently less than four cents, but this sum, small as it



ATHENIAN TETRADRACHMON.

sounds, was probably equal to at least a dollar at the present day ; it was certainly an amount that satisfied the men who received it. It was, to be sure, not enough to tempt the richer citizens, but it tempted the lower classes, and threw the administration of justice into their hands. The demagogues who disposed of this sum naturally secured



thereby the popular favor which they desired. The populace was enabled to live without other work than listening to the arguments in which it delighted, and its welfare depended on the growth of litigation. The play shows these things clearly, and adds an additional sting by charging the demagogues who pretended to spend a tenth part of the revenues of the state in paying the jurymen, with devoting only three-quarters of the sum to this end and keeping the rest.

By the Wasps Aristophanes means these jurymen and judges, the dicasts, with their stings for inscribing their verdicts on the wax tablets as well as the whole populace, buzzing and idle; and in one part of the play, to avoid offense, he speaks of them as symbols to express the bravery and patriotism of the Athenians.

The leading character of the play is Philocleon, or friend of Cleon, the familiar demagogue who had raised the pay of the dicasts to three obols. His son is Bdelycleon, or foe of Cleon; his right to this name will soon be made clear. The play opens with two slaves, Sosias and Xanthias, who are keeping guard, each armed with a spit, over the house of Philocleon, by order of his son, to keep the father from going to court. Bdelycleon, who is within, soon appears at a window and tells them that the old gentleman is trying to crawl through the hole of the kitchen boiler. In a moment his head appears there, and when they ask who's there, he answers, "I am smoke coming out." They stop up the chimney hole and lean against the door. Philocleon in vain appeals to them, urging that a certain man will be acquitted: they are obdurate. Then he pretends that he wants to get out in order to sell his ass, but, says Bdelycleon, "Could I not sell it as well?" "Not as I could," answers the father. Bdelycleon replies, "No better," and leads the ass out. The ingenious Philocleon is, however, discovered concealing himself beneath the ass's belly. They ask him who he is; he answers, imitating the adventure of Odysseus, "Nobody," but they drag him forth and thrust him back into the house. In a moment he is on the roof, and again they have to drive him in from there. At this point appears the chorus of waspish dicasts, trudging along before daybreak to their sitting; they are almost all old men, the younger ones being employed in military service. They are amazed at the tardiness of Philocleon, who was always prompt before this, and they propose to call him out by singing in front of his door:

"Why comes he not forth from his dwelling?  
Can it be that he's had the misfortune to lose  
His one pair of shoes;  
Or, striking his toe in the dark, by the grievous  
Contusion is lamed, and his ankle inflamed?  
Or, his groin has, it may be, a swelling.  
He of all of us, I ween,

Was evermore the austere and most keen.  
 Alone no prayers he heeded:  
 Whene'er for grace they pleaded,  
 He bent (like this) his head,  
*You cook a stone*, he said.  
 Is it all of that yesterday's man who cajoled us,  
 And slipped through our hands, the deceiver,  
 Pretending a lover of Athens to be,  
 Pretending that he  
 Was the first of the Samian rebellion that told us?  
 Our friend may be sick with disgust at the trick,  
 And be now lying ill of a fever."

He would be just that sort of man, they add.

Philocleon peeps out of a window above, however, and confesses that he has been pining to get to them while listening through a crack, but that although he wishes to join them he can not get away; that his son, who has fallen asleep at last, keeps him in confinement. The leader of the chorus asks if there is no hole through which he might escape, disguised in rags, like Odysseus,—a jest at Euripides. There is none, and, encouraged by the chorus, the old man tries to let himself down from the window by a cord. At the last moment Bdelycleon awakes and once more drives his father back. There is a fight between Bdelycleon and his forces and the chorus of dicasts, in which the wasps are unsuccessful. They give orders that Cleon be told, and accuse Bdelycleon of establishing a tyranny—the customary form of abuse. Bdelycleon retorts: Oh yes, everything you do not like is tyranny. Fifty years ago we never heard of it, but now it's cheaper than salt-fish. If any one prefers buying anchovies to buying sprats, the sprat-seller says: This fellow is buying sauce for his tyranny; if any one asks for a leek to eat with his anchovies, the woman who sells herbs asks if it is for a tyranny?

This passage must have cut into the spectators of the play. At this point follows a long and important scene, in which the son urges his father to discontinue his work as a dicast and to live in comfort at home. He proves that the dicasts receive but one hundred and fifty out of two hundred talents, and that the rest lines the pockets of the demagogues. He promises his father to let him exercise his judicial functions in his own household, and, the chorus itself relenting, Philocleon yields to his son's arguments. A grotesque law-suit at once presents itself: The dog Labes has just stolen a Sicilian cheese,—a thin disguise of what was then a recent incident of the war, namely, that Laches, the commander of a fleet sent to Sicily, had embezzled a large sum of money,—and the trial goes on. Labes is acquitted by a mistake, and the unhappy Philocleon faints.

In the parabasis Aristophanes recalls the old-time glory of the

Athenians in the Persian wars, when their stings were deadly weapons, "so that even now among the barbarians nothing has a braver name than the Athenian wasp." In those happy days things were very different:

" 'Twas not then our manhood's test,  
Who can make a fine oration?  
Who is shrewd in litigation?  
It was, who can row the best?"

The rest of the play is made up with a representation of the pleasures of Philocleon, now that he has retired from his labors, and has become a fashionable creature. This gives Aristophanes an opportunity to offer the spectators the sort of merry-making and highly-seasoned revelry which formed an important part of the old comedy. The absence of this attraction from the *Clouds* may have contributed to its failure, and thus the author may have learned very vividly not to deny his audience the entertainment they required. The play ends with the most extravagant dancing. This termination had another advantage in softening any indignation that might have been felt with the more serious part of the comedy. Everywhere the fault-finding is enveloped with such an air of grotesqueness and good-humor that indignation would have been difficult. From the time when Philocleon says that he is the smoke trying to get out of the chimney, to the very end of the play, the serious motive of Aristophanes is enveloped in farce and caricature in such a way that serious opposition would have seemed pedantic and absurd. The earnestness and the facile invention of Aristophanes are most prominent in the play.

## VI.

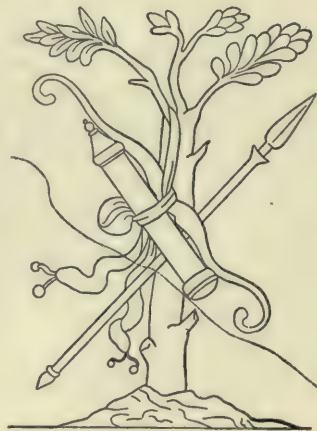
In the *Peace*, as its title shows, the author returns to his favorite subject, the mischief wrought by the Peloponnesian War. The play was brought out in 421 B.C., and secured only the second prize, Eupolis obtaining the first. The reader will readily comprehend the comparative failure of the play, for toward the end there appears a confusion which can be accounted for only on the supposition that we have in our possession a later version of the play which leaves many things unexplained, and even the first part, amusing as it is, is not so overwhelmingly rich in invention as the best of the work of Aristophanes; it is the difference between what is good and what is very good. It is to be borne in mind that the play was acted just before a truce interrupted the war, and that it expressed the longing of the Athenians for a cessation of their miseries. Certainly these were not exaggerated



by the dramatist. The play opens with a countryman named Trygæus making ready to ascend to heaven on a dung-butte. His purpose is to learn from Zeus himself why he has for so long a time afflicted the Athenians, and to remonstrate with him on his cruelty. For this purpose he gets on the back of the butte, thus caricaturing the tragedians, and notably Euripides, who in his *Bellerophon* employed a somewhat similar mechanical device. The daughters of Trygæus, who find him in mid-air, in vain entreat him to return; he spurs on his Pegasus and continues his ascent. Almost at once the scene changes, and he is found at the gates of heaven, where he confronts Hermes, who is at first disposed to harshness, but speedily relents on being bribed with some meat. The god, being thus appeased, readily answers the ques-



THE SACRED MYRTLE.

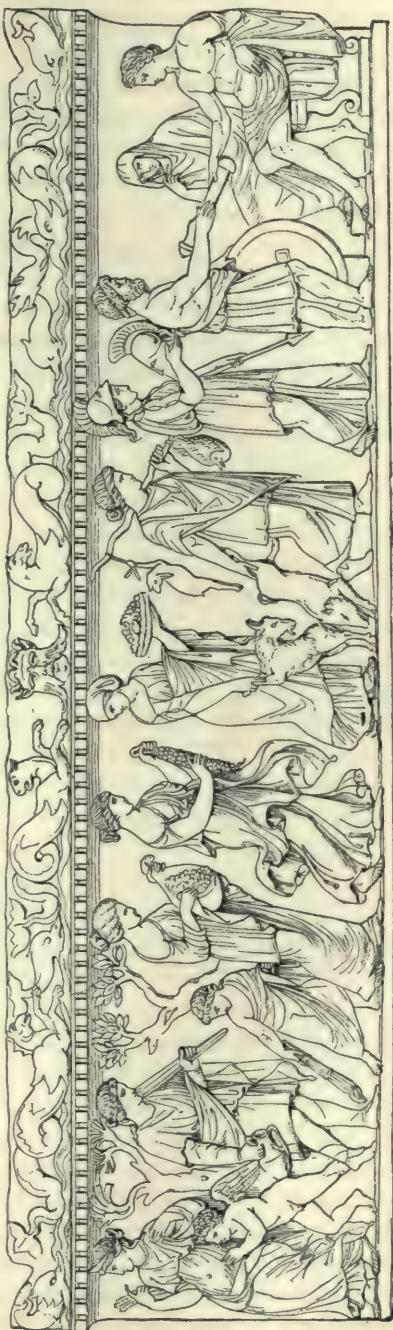


LAUREL DEDICATED TO ARTEMIS.

## EMBLEMS OF PEACE.

tions of Trygæus, and informs him that the gods, in their wrath at the unwisdom of Greece, have moved away to the remotest part of heaven and have left him there in charge of the pots and pans of the celestial housekeeping. They have left in their place War, to harry the Greeks as may to him seem good; as for themselves, they want to get out of the way of seeing any more fighting and listening to supplications. This is not all. War has cast Peace into a deep cave and buried her beneath a huge pile of stones, and has furthermore got a large mortar in which to bray the Hellenic cities. All that he lacks is a pestle, and he calls to his servant Tumult to fetch him one. Tumult hastens after one to Athens, but Cleon, the Athenian pestle, is dead—he fell at the battle of Amphipolis, as did Brasi-

das, the Lacedæmonian—so that Sparta is also unable to supply one. War and Tumult then go within in order to make a pestle, and Trygæus takes advantage of their absence to summon the chorus to set Peace free. He further secures the silence of Hermes by giving him a gold cup, and after strenuous exertions, Peace, Oporia, the goddess of fruits, and Theoria, the deity of processions and festivities, all come out from the cave, bringing with them the savors of autumn, of festivals, fruits, comedies, strains of Sophocles, half-lines of Euripides, bleating sheep, and all the blessings of tranquillity. The makers of weapons are in despair, but all others are delighted. Trygæus, who represents the countrymen whose farms had been every year devastated by the Spartans, longs to get out into the fields again, and to break up the ground anew. He appeals to the chorus to remember their old course of life, the preserved fruits, the figs, the myrtles, the sweet new wine, the violet bed by the side of the well, and the olives they long for. It is these vivid little touches in Aristophanes that with their eternal beauty and freshness forever charm the reader, as they must have given the intensest delight to the Athenians themselves. Elsewhere in this play we find a similar passage, where the chorus expresses its joy at the chance to lay aside the helmet and to give up cheese and onions. "For I do not



JOYS OF PEACE.  
(Relief in Villa Albani.)



care for battles, but what I like is to sit at the fireside and drink with my companions, after lighting the dryest of last season's wood, roasting pease and putting acorns on the fire, at the same time kissing the Thracian maid while my wife is washing. And when the seed is in the ground, and the rain is falling, then is the time for some neighbors to look in and ask what we shall do. 'I have a mind to drink,' he proposes. 'Come, wife, roast some kidney beans, and mix some wheat with them, and bring out some figs, and let the girl call in Mauro from the field, for it's too wet to-day for him to be trimming the vines or grubbing at the roots. And I want some one to fetch from my house a thrush and the two spinks. And there was some beestings there, and four pieces of hare, unless the marten (the cat of antiquity) carried them off last evening—for I certainly heard something racketing about there. Give one of the pieces to my father and bring us the other three, and ask Æschinades to let us have some fruit-bearing myrtles, and at the same time, for it's just on the way, let some one ask Charinades to come and drink with us, while the weather is so favorable to the crops." In a similar fashion the joys of a warm, bright summer day are described, and are set in contrast to the odious incidents of war, when the husbandman sees his name down on the list for to-morrow's sally. Nothing is more noticeable than the charm of these passages except their rarity in all literature. The play ends with Trygæus giving himself up to pleasure with Peace. Aristophanes obeyed the unwritten law that demanded scenes of revelry, though here they are half-hearted and comparatively cold. The best part of the play is already told. The lesson, though veiled in broad comedy, had been given.

## VII.

The *Birds*, which won the second prize in 414 B.C., appeared, it will be noticed, after a long interval, concerning which we have no information. At the time it was brought out, the affairs of the Athenians had only gone from bad to worse, but their hopes were now centered on the expedition to Sicily, which they trusted would restore and extend their power. In this fantastic play we see a caricature of extravagant plans and hopes, and a representation of the inevitable evils that accompanied the Greek civilization. Yet throughout the author is good-humored and gentle; his bitterness is in perfect control.

The play opens with two Athenian citizens, Peisthetairus and Euelpides, wandering in a wild, remote region, carrying respectively a raven and a jackdaw, the motions of which they are observing as directions of their steps. Soon both the birds point upward, and they guess that



they have arrived at the place where they wish to be ; consequently they knock. The door is opened by *Trochilus*, whose appearance startles them very much, and they are even more amazed when the royal hoopoe comes forth and asks their business, which is to find some country where the cares of life shall lie light upon them. The hoopoe suggests various places, which, however, the men object to, when suddenly *Euelpides* asks how life is among the birds.

“ Pretty fair ;  
Not much amiss. Time passes smoothly enough,  
And money is out of the question. We don’t use it.”

It at once occurs to *Peisthetairus* that it would be an excellent plan for them to build a city in mid-air. They can intercept the offerings of men to the gods from the commanding position : in short, it is an excellent plan. The hoopoe determines to consult the other birds to learn their opinion, and for this purpose he retires behind the scene, whence this song to the nightingale is heard to issue :

“ Awake ! awake !  
Sleep no more, my gentle mate !  
With your tiny tawny bill,  
Wake the tuneful echo shrill,  
On vale or hill ;  
Or in her airy rocky seat,  
Let her listen and repeat  
The tender ditty that you tell,  
The sad lament,  
The dire event,  
To luckless *Itys* that befell.  
Thence the strain  
Shall rise again,  
And soar amain,  
Up to the lofty palace gate,  
Where mighty *Apollo* sits in state  
In *Jove’s* abode, with his ivory lyre,  
Hymning aloud to the heavenly quire ;  
While all the gods shall join with thee  
In a celestial symphony.”

This is followed by a flute solo imitation of the nightingale’s call, and then by the hoopoe’s summons to the whole feathered tribe to assemble :

“ Hoop ! hoop !  
Come in a troop,  
Come at a call  
One and all,  
Birds of a feather,  
All together,  
Birds of a humble gentle bill  
Smooth and shrill,

Dieted on seeds and grain,  
 Rioting on the furrow'd plain,  
 Pecking, hopping,  
 Picking, popping,  
 Among the barley newly sown," etc., etc.

The birds gather in great numbers, and naturally, when they see the two men, imagine themselves entrapped; the men are quite as much alarmed, but at length the truth is made known, and Peisthetairus expounds his plan. He explains to them with ready ingenuity that the birds are the earliest beings in the world, older than the gods themselves, and are powerful, although now shamefully maltreated:

"Weak, forlorn, exposed to scorn,  
 Distress'd, oppress'd, never at rest.  
 Daily pursued with outrage rude,  
 With cries and noise of men and boys,  
 Screaming, hooting, pelting, shooting," etc.

But with the city once built, they will send a herald to Zeus forbidding the gods to pass through their territory, and to men in order to secure a good share of the sacrifices. They will also be able to aid the human race by devouring insects, telling secrets, which even in these later days are known to the little birds. The picture tempts them and the plan is swiftly carried out. The name of Cloud-cuckooland is given to the projected city, and at once a mockery of important ceremonies begins; a sacrifice is caricatured; a starving poet is on hand with his ready-made congratulatory odes; a soothsayer comes with vague oracles that might mean any thing, although they close with an order for a coat and shoes for the man who brings them: he is met,



A WEDDING.

however, by opposition oracles that command that he shall be given a drubbing; a ridiculous astronomer appears to make fantastic measurements; absurd laws are proposed, and during all this turmoil the completion of the city is suddenly announced. Then Iris appears on her way to command that men should sacrifice to Zeus; she is turned back, and the city begins its municipal life. A young scapegrace is the first to appear, who is disappointed to find that he can not beat his father and thus lay his hands on his expected property; a poet is denied a pair of wings with which to soar; a sycophant is dismissed; the gods themselves, who are starving, now that the sacrifices that they once received are, as it were, blockaded, have to come to terms, and the play ends with an epithalamium on the marriage of Peisthetairus with Basileia, or royalty, who manages the thunderbolts of Zeus, and controls every form of good government.

The copiousness of the imagination of Aristophanes is certainly evident even in this cold outline; quite as striking is the movement of the play, which knows no modification from the beginning to the end. These qualities have given it a fame in modern times greater than perhaps any other of this writer's comedies. Yet, possibly, although it is full of allusions that carried swift and clear meaning to the Athenians, its artificial and fantastic setting has given it a higher place in modern opinion than it won at home. We are so accustomed to having our literature different from life that we are disposed to admire less the vividness of Aristophanes and his pictures of everyday incidents than a carefully built-up vision of impossibilities such as this play presents. Yet, what the Athenians enjoyed here was probably the vision of Athens that stood out even in cloudland. Even when most fantastic Aristophanes was true to life.

## VIII.

In the *Lysistrata*, 411 B.C., we find him returning to his old subject, the desirability of peace, and he preaches the familiar doctrine in the most grotesque fashion. *Lysistrata*, the heroine, is disgusted with the unending martial zeal of the men, and summons the women together to take measures to bring the contestants to terms. Delegates assemble from Attica, Bœotia and the Peloponnesus, whom she persuades to swear a solemn oath that they will live apart from their lovers and husbands until they consent to make peace. Meanwhile the women take possession of the Acropolis and lay hands on the treasury of the state, so that the men may be the sooner brought to terms. The chorus of aged Athenian men assembles with all sorts of combustibles in order to burn the women out from their stronghold;



but they fail completely. All sorts of ludicrous and indescribable scenes follow until finally the men yield and *Lysistrata* is enabled to conclude a peace amid the general rejoicing of Spartans and Athenians.

In the *Thesmophoriazusæ*, or the Women at the Festival of Demeter, Aristophanes attacks his old enemy, Euripides, with as much venom as he had shown against those whom he had regarded as the open



COLOSSAL STATUE OF DEMETER.

foes of the state. Whatever the reason, this play contains no allusion to politics—although, or possibly because, the condition of Athens was then, 410 B.C., most unfortunate—it is a literary warfare with which Aristophanes amused his fellow-citizens. Yet it is not without a serious purpose that he chose what might at first sight appear to be a trivial subject, for in his eyes Euripides was the exponent of the new false learning which cut into the very heart of Athenian life, and, farther than this, the play gave him an opportunity to draw a picture of the condition of women, a subject always attractive to any one with powers of invective.

The plot of the play is ingenious. At the festival in celebration of the two goddesses, women from every tribe used to assemble to perform the mysterious rites. Men were carefully excluded, and the performances were kept a profound secret, but the poet ventures to suggest that they at least on this occasion are busying themselves about how they shall revenge themselves on Euripides for speaking ill of the sex in his tragedies. This at least is the fear that inspires Euripides to try to persuade his colleague, Agathon, to take advantage of his effeminate appearance and to join them at the festival where he may overcome the women's arguments. At the very beginning of the play Aristophanes ridicules Euripides as a student of the new learning, by representing him as a pedantic, logic-chopping sophist. His father-in-law, Mnesilochus, says, "You tell me that I must neither hear nor see"; to which Euripides makes answer, "The nature of each is distinct, of not hearing, and of not seeing." "How so?" asks Mnesilochus,

"They were formerly distinguished in this way. For Ether, when it was first separated, and bore moving animals in itself, first contrived an eye for what should see, modeled after the face of the sun, and bored ears like a funnel." This is doubtless meant as a caricature of the new gropings after a scientific explanation of things, in which Euripides was much interested. It is all forgotten, however, as the play goes on, and Agathon first comes in for a good deal of contemptuous treatment for his effeminacy. He absolutely declines to do what Euripides desires, so the tragic poet turns to Mnesilochus and asks him to disguise himself as a woman and go to the festival. Euripides has already rejected Agathon's proposal that he should go himself, on the grounds that he is well-known, is gray-haired, and wears a beard, but he has no mercy for Mnesilochus, whom he compels to array himself like a woman, and to shave himself; all of which preparations are made with abundant farcicality upon the stage. Mnesilochus, after he is made ready, consents to go, after he has secured a promise of aid from Euripides whenever it should be necessary.

The next scene is at the temple of Demeter, where the women are assembled and soon begin to discuss the misdeeds of Euripides. He has aroused the evil suspicions of men, so that they are prone to put the worst interpretation on the most trivial circumstances; the old men, warned by one of his lines, no longer marry young girls; they all put seals and bolts on the women's apartments; in short, he has made women's lives intolerable, and the question before the meeting is what shall be done with this arch-enemy. Other women have their say; they accuse him of teaching that there are no gods, so that the business of making myrtle-wreaths is ruined. There is nothing but denunciation of the unhappy poet until Mnesilochus undertakes his defense. He tells a long story which is cunningly devised to point out how many peccadilloes had escaped the notice of Euripides; in a word, how much worse women were even than he had described them, and argues that they have no reason to be angry with the poet, since they have done so much worse. His words excite a great deal of confusion, and the women at once begin to suspect some treachery, and that he is a man in disguise. Mnesilochus, when he is once started, pours out a long list of black crimes, how the women give their lovers the broken victuals and say the cat ate them, etc. He only infuriates his hearers, and when Clisthenes, who is permitted to be present, such is his effeminacy, brings them the news that Euripides has sent his father-in-law to be with them, they are beside themselves with wrath. It is with extreme jollity that they detect the trick of Mnesilochus, and swear vengeance. They determine to burn him alive, and in order to secure a hostage against ill-treatment, he seizes a child that one of



the women is carrying, which turns out to be a wine-skin dressed up to resemble a baby—an unfortunate discovery, for on this day abstinence from wine was enforced upon the celebrants—and drains it himself. He is at their mercy, and tries to devise some plan of escape from his recollection of similar difficulties in the plays of his son-in-law. In the parabasis, the leader of the chorus of women praises her own sex at the expense of the men, but this forms but a brief interruption. Mnesilochus pretends that he is Helen in the tragedy of Euripides already discussed, and there is a curious jumble of lines parodying that play; and when Euripides, who appears as Menelaus in the *Helen*, tries to lead his father-in-law off, he is stopped by the entrance of the policeman who comes to fasten the aged offender to a plank. Then, while Mnesilochus is secured like Andromeda, Euripides comes in disguised as Perseus, but he can do nothing, and he tries once more in the form of Echo, in which he repeats the words of his relative and of the policeman, who is much baffled. Finally, the poet comes back as an old woman in company with a dancing-girl, who by her wiles distracts the policeman, so that Mnesilochus can be freed and escape. This device also serves to give the end of the play its rollicking sportiveness.

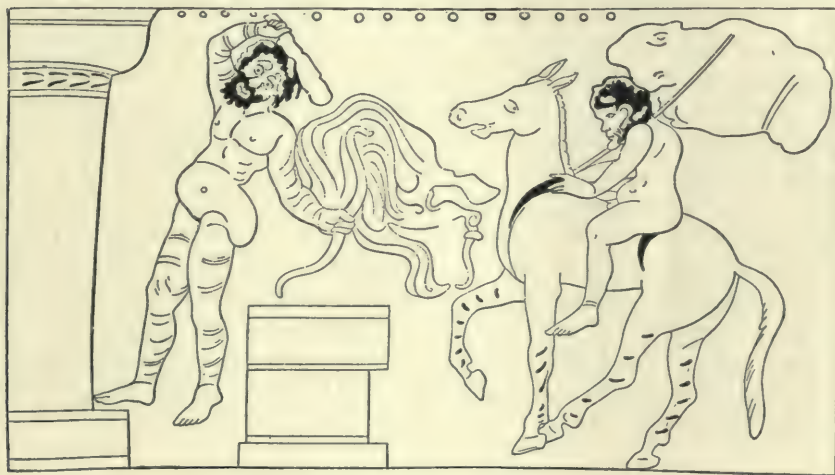
A more absurd play was never written; it is a farce from beginning to end, and one abounding with the happiest invention and the most remorseless caricature. As political references became dangerous, and the peril of Athens muzzled Aristophanes and prevented him from referring to the rulers and their misdeeds, he was yet free to attack the modern spirit as this was illustrated by Euripides. In his hopeless struggle to make time stand still, he saw no difference between political decay and the general movement of literature. Certainly this error, if it was an error, was a natural one; the confusion of Athenian politics, the lack of lofty principles, the desperate though hopeless groping for any means to attain success, were certainly marks of degeneracy. And just as the sublimity of the tragedies of Æschylus was the literary expression of the old-time hopefulness, the more complicated interests of the later days found their expression in the drama of Euripides, who developed the notion of individuality—which was the disintegration of the former intellectual and social unity—and represented the pathetic incidents of the old myths as if the simpler statement of them could no longer interest his audience. His devotion to the humble beginnings of science, that put physical cause and effect in the place of divine control, seemed to Aristophanes as wrong as his interest in the new-fangled rhetoric which succeeded the former majesty and directness. Yet what we can see in the perspective of more than two thousand years was invisible to Aristophanes, who beheld the firm ground slipping from beneath his feet,



and who saw no other hope than in restoring, or trying to restore, the old convictions that had made Greece great. These had done a great work; experiments were perilous. In fact, however, his attempt was the most hopeless of experiments, and his endeavors to restore the vanished past remain as the most tragically sad appeals that Greek literature knows. Wit, pathos, earnestness, were powerless to stop the stream of time. The denunciations of Aristophanes, though powerless to check the current of contemporary thought, at least besmirched the reputation of Euripides for a long time. Even now, or at any rate until very recently, his shoulders were burdened with the whole responsibility for the swift decay of Hellenic principles.

## IX.

In the *Frogs* we find Aristophanes still pursuing the same foe with relentless energy. Whereas in the *Thesmophoriazusæ* he had attacked



SCENE FROM THE FROGS.

him with all the revelry of a farce, here he constructs a comedy with the utmost care for the purpose, not of merely ridiculing him, but of destroying his reputation. It is a serious onslaught that he makes with the aid of his incomparable humor.

The play was brought out in 405 B.C., shortly after the death of both Sophocles and Euripides, when the tragic stage had lost both the writers who alone formed its glory; Dionysus is represented as mourning the absence of deserving competitors, and determined to try to bring back from the lower regions a poet who should renew the ancient successes. The play opens with Dionysus, arrayed like

Heracles, in company with his slave Xanthias entering before the temple of Heracles, and exchanging gentle jokes over the poor jests of the other writers of comedy. When they have called forth Heracles, Dionysus announces his intention to fetch Euripides from the other world, and asks Heracles, who is familiar with the way, which is the best road to take; Heracles recommends hanging, poison, or leaping from a high place. In the next scene they are on the banks of the Styx, which they cross with an accompaniment of ludicrous adventures. Once on the other side their fate is even more absurd; Dionysus appears as a coward and makes Xanthias put on the lion's robe and take the club—both formed the distinguishing guise of Heracles—while he appears as a slave; all of which is a caricature of the tragedies that dealt with journeys to the nether regions, besides being capital farce. It all brings them to the abode of the dead, where a public contest is to decide the relative superiority of Æschylus and Euripides. Æschylus had held the position which was now disputed by Euripides, who had roused the interest of the mob in his behalf. Sophocles was content with a seat by the side of Æschylus. There is a great deal of clapper-clawing on the part of Euripides, who speaks of his predecessor's frequent habit of introducing a character who long remained silent, and then, after long songs from the chorus, would utter a dozen words as big as bulls wearing bows and crests, tremendous fellows of terrific aspect, wholly unfamiliar to the spectators; he then boasts the superiority of his own method, when he used to let some character explain everything in a prologue, and employing plain language so that any one could understand him, instead of using monstrous words. Æschylus makes a comparison between the Athenians of his time and those whom Euripides had left, greatly to his own advantage, and claims for himself and his work the merit of forming better citizens: in his *Seven against Thebes*, he says,

"Inspired each spectator with martial ambition,  
Courage, and ardor, and prowess, and pride."

Now Euripides has altered all this :

"He has taught every soul to sophisticate truth;  
And debauched all the bodies and minds of the youth;  
Leaving them morbid, and pallid, and spare;  
And the places of exercise vacant and bare:  
The disorder has spread to the fleet and the crew;  
The service is ruined, and ruined by you—  
With prate and debate in a mutinous state;  
Whereas, in my day, 'twas a different way;  
Nothing they said, nor knew nothing to say,  
But to call for their porridge, and cry 'Pull away.'"

From general denunciations they soon come to special criticisms of each other's work. *Æschylus* quotes a few lines of his own work :

"From his sepulchral mound I call my father  
To listen and hear——"

"There's a tautology,  
'To listen and hear,'"—

cries *Euripides*.

Then the later poet brings examples of his own superiority, which *Æschylus* criticises in his turn. Then they exchange abuse of each other's musical powers. Finally, *Dionysus* produces a huge pair of scales to weigh the sentences of the two combatants, and those of *Æschylus* tip the scale, so that *Dionysus* decides to carry *Æschylus* back with him and to leave *Euripides* in the nether world. Thus the inferiority of the later poet is distinctly shown, or at least his inferiority in the estimation of *Aristophanes*.

The care which the author has shown in his attack on *Euripides* is certainly interesting, and his bitterness in carrying on his warfare after his antagonist had died has been much blamed in modern times. It is probable, however, that this objection could not have been felt so keenly by *Aristophanes*, or he would not have prejudiced his own cause by hounding the dead. Just as he enjoyed unequaled freedom in abusing the living, he doubtless was at liberty to speak his mind about those in the grave, for it must be remembered that these were not supposed to be lifted above discussion by removal to a happier land. However this may be, the fact that *Aristophanes* made this deliberate and careful onslaught upon *Euripides*, and, instead of contenting himself, as he had done previously, with mere farcical ridicule, gave his reasons, with a show of impartiality letting *Euripides* defend his work, seems to show, what in fact we know, that this tragedian held a high place in the public estimation; possibly his recent death at a foreign court had reminded the Athenians how great a man they had lost, and had given them a vivid sense of the injustice of his foes. To counteract this feeling, it may be supposed, *Aristophanes* wrote the *Frogs*, which is perhaps the most carefully contrived of all his plays. Nowhere else is the main design of the comedy less entrusted to mere high spirits and ridicule.

The chorus of frogs, it should be added, were not seen; the proper chorus consisted of the votaries of *Dionysus*. This last-mentioned body had a meaning for the Greeks, who understood allusions to the initiated and to the mysteries that are obscure to us.

It is to be noticed, also, that *Aristophanes* is by no means disposed to give *Æschylus* indiscriminating praise; he points out



that poet's faults, without virulence, but with a manifest desire for impartiality.

*Scene.*—EURIPIDES, BACCHUS, ÆSCHYLUS.

EU. Don't give me your advice, I claim the seat  
As being a better and superior artist.

B. What, Æschylus, don't you speak? You hear his language.

EU. He's mustering up a grand commanding visage  
— A silent attitude — the common trick  
That he begins with in his tragedies.

B. Come, have a care, my friend — You'll say too much.

EU. I know the man of old — I've scrutinized  
And shewn him long ago for what he is,  
A rude unbridled tongue, a haughty spirit;  
Proud, arrogant, and insolently pompous;  
Rough, clownish, boisterous and overbearing.

ÆS. Say'st thou me so? Thou bastard of the earth,  
With thy patch'd robes and rags of sentiment  
Raked from the streets and stitch'd and tack'd together!  
Thou mumping, whining, beggarly hypocrite!  
But you shall pay for it.

B. (*in addressing Æschylus attempts to speak in more elevated style*). There  
now, Æschylus,

You grow too warm. Restrain your ireful mood.

ÆS. Yes; but I'll seize that sturdy beggar first,  
And search and strip him bare of his pretensions.

B. Quick! Quick! A sacrifice to the winds — Make ready;  
The storm of rage is gathering. Bring a victim.

ÆS. A wretch that has corrupted every thing;  
Our music with his melodies from Crete;  
Our morals with his incestuous tragedies.

B. Dear, worthy Æschylus, contain yourself,  
And as for you, Euripides, move off  
This instant, if you're wise; I give you warning.  
Or else, with one of his big thumping phrases,  
You'll get your brains dash'd out, and all your notions  
And sentiments and matter mash'd to pieces.  
— And thee, most noble Æschylus (*as above*), I beseech  
With mild demeanour, calm and affable  
To hear and answer.— For it ill beseems  
Illustrious bards to scold like market-women.  
But you roar out and bellow like a furnace.

EU. (*in the tone of a town blackguard working himself up for a quarrel*).

I'm up to it.— I'm resolved, and here I stand  
Ready and steady— take what course you will;  
Let him be first to speak, or else let me.  
I'll match my plots and characters against him;  
My sentiments and language, and what not:  
Ay! and my music too, my Meleager,  
My Æolus and my Telephus and all.

B. Well, Æschylus,— determine. What say you?

ÆS. (*speaks in a tone of grave manly despondency*).  
I wish the place of trial had been elsewhere,  
I stand at disadvantage here.

B. As how?

ÆS. Because my poems live on earth above,  
And his died with him, and descended here,  
And are at hand as ready witnesses;  
But you decide the matter: I submit.

B. (*with official pertness and importance*).

Come — let them bring me fire and frankincense,  
That I may offer vows and make oblations  
For an ingenious critical conclusion  
To this same elegant and clever trial —  
(*To the Chorus.*)  
And you too,— sing me a hymn there.—To the Muses.

## CHORUS.

To the Heavenly Nine we petition,  
Ye, that on earth or in air are for ever kindly protecting the vagaries of learned  
ambition,  
And at your ease from above our sense and folly directing, (or poetical contests  
inspecting,  
Deign to behold for a while as a scene of amusing attention, all the struggles of style  
and invention.)  
Aid, and assist, and attend, and afford to the furious authors your refined and  
enlighten'd suggestions;  
Grant them ability — force and agility, quick recollections, and address in their  
answers and questions,  
Pithy replies, with a word to the wise, and pulling and hauling, with inordinate uproar  
and bawling,  
Driving and drawing, like carpenters sawing, their dramas asunder :  
With suspended sense and wonder,  
All are waiting and attending  
On the conflict now depending !

B. Come, say your prayers, you two before the trial.

[*Æschylus offers incense.*

ÆS. O Ceres, nourisher of my soul, maintain me  
A worthy follower of thy mysteries.

B. (*to Euripides.*) There, you there, make your offering.

EU. Well, I will ;

But I direct myself to other deities.

B. Heh, what ? Your own ? Some new ones ?

EU. Most assuredly !

B. Well ! Pray away, then — to your own new deities.

[*Euripides offers incense.*

EU. Thou foodful Air, the nurse of all my notions ;  
And ye, the organic powers of sense and speech,  
And keen refined olfactory discernment,  
Assist my present search for faults and errors.

## CHORUS.

Here beside you, here are we,  
Eager all to hear and see  
This abstruse and mighty battle  
Of profound and learned prattle  
— But, as it appears to me,  
Thus the course of it will be ;  
He, the junior and appellant,  
Will advance as the assailant,  
Aiming shrewd satyric darts  
At his rival's noble parts ;  
And with sallies sharp and keen  
Try to wound him in the spleen,  
While the veteran rends and raises  
Rifted, rough, uprooted phrases,  
Wielded like a threshing staff  
Scattering the dust and chaff.

B. Come, now, begin, dispute away, but first I give you notice  
That every phrase in your discourse must be refined, avoiding  
Vulgar absurd comparisons, and awkward silly joking.

EU. At the first outset, I forbear to state my own pretensions;



SERVANT MASK.

Hereafter I shall mention them, when  
his have been refuted;  
After I shall have fairly shown how  
he befool'd and cheated  
The rustic audience that he found,  
which Phrynichus bequeathed  
him.

He planted first upon the stage a figure  
veil'd and muffled,  
An Achilles or a Niobe, that never  
show'd their faces;  
But kept a tragic attitude, without a  
word to utter.

B. No more they did; 'tis very true.

EU. — In the meanwhile the Chorus  
Strung on ten strophes right-on-end,  
but they remain'd in silence.

B. I liked that silence well enough, as  
well, perhaps, or better

Than those new talking characters —  
EU. That's from your want of judg-  
ment,

Believe me.

B. Why, perhaps it is; but what was his intention?

EU. Why, mere conceit and insolence: to keep the people waiting  
Till Niobe should deign to speak, to drive his drama forward.

B. O what a rascal! Now I see the tricks he used to play me.

[*To Æschylus, who is showing signs of indignation by various contortions.*  
—What makes you writhe and wince about?—

EU. Because he feels my censures.  
—Then having dragg'd and drawl'd along, half-way to the conclusion,  
He foisted in a dozen words of noisy boisterous accent,  
With lofty plumes and shaggy brows, mere bugbears of the language,  
That no man ever heard before.—

Æs. Alas! alas!

B. (*to Æschylus*).

Have done there!

EU. He never used a simple word.

B. (*to Æschylus*).

Don't grind your teeth so strangely.

EU. But "Bulwarks and Scamanders" and "Hippogriffs and Gorgons."  
"On burnish'd shields emboss'd in brass;" bloody, remorseless phrases  
Which nobody could understand.

B. Well, I confess, for my part,

I used to keep awake at night, with guesses and conjectures  
To think what kind of foreign bird he meant by griffin-horses.

Æs. A figure on the heads of ships; you goose, you must have seen them.

B. Well, from the likeness, I declare, I took it for Eruxis.

EU. So! Figures from the heads of ships are fit for tragic diction.

Æs. Well then—thou paltry wretch, explain. What were your own devices?

EU. Not stories about flying-stags, like yours, and griffin-horses;  
Nor terms nor images derived from tapestry Persian hangings.  
When I received the Muse from you I found her puff'd and pamper'd  
With pompous sentences and terms, a cumbrous huge virago.  
My first attention was applied to make her look genteelly;  
And bring her to a slighter shape by dint of lighter diet:  
I fed her with plain household phrase, and cool familiar salad,  
With water-gruel episode, with sentimental jelly,



- With moral mincemeat ; till at length I brought her into compass ;  
 Cephisophon, who was my cook, contrived to make them relish.  
 I kept my plots distinct and clear, and, to prevent confusion,  
 My leading characters rehearsed their pedigrees for prologues.
- Æs. 'Twas well, at least, that you forbore to quote your own extraction.
- Eu. From the first opening of the scene, all persons were in action ;  
 The master spoke, the slave replied, the women, young and old ones,  
 All had their equal share of talk—
- Æs. Come, then, stand forth and tell us,  
 What forfeit less than death is due for such an innovation ?
- Eu. I did it upon principle, from democratic motives.
- B. Take care, my friend—upon that ground your footing is but ticklish.
- Eu. I taught these youths to speechify.
- Æs. I say so too. Moreover  
 I say that—for the public good—you ought to have been hang'd first.
- Eu. The rules and forms of rhetoric,—the laws of composition,  
 To prate—to state—and in debate to meet a question fairly :  
 At a dead lift to turn and shift—to make a nice distinction.
- Æs. I grant it all—I make it all—my grounds of accusation.
- Eu. The whole in cases and concerns occurring and recurring  
 At every turn and every day domestic and familiar,  
 So that the audience, one and all, from personal experience,  
 Were competent to judge the piece, and form a fair opinion  
 Whether my scenes and sentiments agreed with truth and nature.  
 I never took them by surprise to storm their understandings,  
 With Memnons and Tydides's and idle rattle-trappings  
 Of battle-steeds and clattering shields to scare them from their senses ;  
 But for a test (perhaps the best) our pupils and adherents  
 May be distinguish'd instantly by person and behaviour ;  
 His are Phormisius the rough, Meganetes the gloomy,  
 Hobgoblin-headed, trumpet-mouth'd, grim-visaged, ugly-bearded ;  
 But mine are Cleitophon the smooth,—Theramenes the gentle.
- B. Theramenes—a clever hand, a universal genius,  
 I never found him at a loss in all the turns of party  
 To change his watch-word at a word or at a moment's warning.
- Eu. Thus it was that I began,  
 With a nicer, neater plan ;  
 Teaching men to look about,  
 Both within doors and without ;  
 To direct their own affairs,  
 And their house and household wares ;  
 Marking every thing amiss—  
 " Where is that ? " and—" What is this ? "  
 " This is broken—that is gone,"  
 'Tis the modern style and tone.
- B. Yes, by Jove—and at their homes  
 Nowadays each master comes,  
 Of a sudden bolting in  
 With an uproar and a din ;  
 Rating all the servants round,  
 " If it's lost, it must be found.  
 Why was all the garlic wasted ?  
 There, that honey has been tasted :  
 And these olives pilfer'd here.  
 Where's the pot we bought last year ?  
 What's become of all the fish ?  
 Which of you has broke the dish ? "  
 Thus it is, but heretofore,  
 The moment that they cross'd the door,  
 They sat them down to doze and snore.

## CHORUS

" Noble Achilles ! You see the disaster,  
 The shame and affront, and an enemy nigh !"  
 Oh, bethink thee, mighty master,  
 Think, betimes of your reply ;  
 Yet beware, lest anger force  
 Your hasty chariot from the course ;  
 Grievous charges have been heard,  
 With many a sharp and bitter word,  
 Notwithstanding, mighty chief,  
 Let Prudence fold her cautious reef  
 In your anger's swelling sail ;  
 By degrees you may prevail,  
 But beware of your behaviour  
 Till the wind is in your favour :  
 Now for your answer, illustrious architect,  
 Founder of lofty theatrical lays !  
 Patron in chief of our tragical trumperies !  
 Open the floodgate of figure and phrase !

- Æs. My spirit is kindled with anger and shame,  
 To so base a competitor forced to reply,  
 But I needs must retort, or the wretch will report  
 That he left me refuted and foil'd in debate ;  
 Tell me then, What are the principal merits  
 Entitling a poet to praise and renown ?
- EU. The improvement of morals, the progress of mind,  
 When a poet, by skill and invention,  
 Can render his audience virtuous and wise.
- Æs. But if you, by neglect or intention,  
 Have done the reverse, and from brave honest spirits  
 Depraved, and have left them degraded and base,  
 Tell me, what punishment ought you to suffer ?
- B. Death, to be sure !— Take that answer from me.
- Æs. Observe then, and mark, what our citizens were,  
 When first from my care they were trusted to you ;  
 Not scoundrel informers, or paltry buffoons,  
 Evading the services due to the state ;  
 But with hearts all on fire, for adventure and war,  
 Distinguish'd for hardiness, stature, and strength,  
 Breathing forth nothing but lances and darts,  
 Arms and equipment, and battle array,  
 Bucklers, and shields, and habergeons, and hauberks,  
 Helmets, and plumes, and heroic attire.
- B. There he goes, hammering on with his helmets,  
 He'll be the death of me,— one of these days.
- EU. But how did you manage to make 'em so manly,  
 What was the method, the means that you took ?
- B. Speak, Æschylus, speak and behave yourself better,  
 And don't in your rage stand so silent and stern.
- Æs. A drama, brimful with heroical spirit.
- EU. What did you call it ?
- Æs. " The Chiefs against Thebes,"  
 That inspired each spectator with martial ambition,  
 Courage, and ardour, and prowess, and pride.
- B. But you did very wrong to encourage the Thebans.  
 Indeed, you deserve to be punish'd, you do,  
 For the Thebans are grown to be capital soldiers,  
 You've done us a mischief by that very thing.
- Æs. The fault was your own, if you took other courses ;  
 The lesson I taught was directed to you :

- Then I gave you the glorious theme of "the Persians,"  
 Replete with sublime patriotical strains,  
 The record and example of noble achievement,  
 The delight of the city, the pride of the stage.
- B. I rejoiced, I confess, when the tidings were carried  
 To old King Darius, so long dead and buried,  
 And the chorus in concert kept wringing their hands,  
 Weeping and wailing, and crying, Alas!
- Æs. Such is the duty, the task of a poet,  
 Fulfilling in honor his office and trust.  
 Look to traditional history—look  
 To antiquity, primitive, early, remote :  
 See there, what a blessing illustrious poets  
 Conferr'd on mankind in the centuries past,  
 Orpheus instructed mankind in religion,  
 Reclaim'd them from bloodshed and barbarous rites ;  
 Musæus deliver'd the doctrine of medicine,  
 And warnings prophetic for ages to come ;  
 Next came old Hesiod, teaching us husbandry,  
 Ploughing, and sowing, and rural affairs,  
 Rural economy, rural astronomy,  
 Homely morality, labour and thrift ;  
 Homer himself, our adorable Homer,  
 What was his title to praise and renown ?  
 What, but the worth of the lessons he taught us,  
 Discipline, arms, and equipment of war ?
- B. Yes, but Pantacles was never the wiser ;  
 For in the procession he ought to have led,  
 When his helmet was tied, he kept puzzling, and tried  
 To fasten the crest on the crown of his head.
- Æs. But other brave warriors and noble commanders  
 Were train'd in his lessons to valour and skill ;  
 Such was the noble heroical Lamachus ;  
 Others besides were instructed by him ;  
 And I, from his fragments ordaining a banquet,  
 Furnish'd and deck'd with majestical phrase,  
 Brought forward the models of ancient achievement,  
 Teucer, Patroclus, and chiefs of antiquity ;  
 Raising and rousing Athenian hearts,  
 When the signal of onset was blown in their ear,  
 With a similar ardour to dare and to do ;  
 But I never allow'd of your lewd Sthenobœas,  
 Or filthy, detestable Phædras — not I—  
 Indeed, I should doubt if my drama throughout  
 Exhibit an instance of woman in love.
- Eu. No, you were too stern for an amorous turn,  
 For Venus and Cupid too stern and too stupid.
- Æs. May they leave me at rest, and with peace in my breast,  
 And infest and pursue your kindred and you,  
 With the very same blow that despatch'd you below.
- B. That was well enough said ; with the life that he led,  
 He himself in the end got a wound from a friend.
- Eu. But what, after all, is the horrible mischief ?  
 My poor Sthenobœas, what harm have they done ?
- Æs. The example is follow'd, the practice has gain'd,  
 And women of family, fortune, and worth,  
 Bewilder'd with shame in a passionate fury,  
 Have poison'd themselves for Bellerophon's sake.
- Eu. But at least you'll allow that I never invented it,  
 Phædra's affair was a matter of fact.



ÆS. A fact with a vengeance! but horrible facts  
Should be buried in silence, not bruited abroa,  
Nor brought forth on the stage, nor emblazon'd in poetry.  
Children and boys have a teacher assign'd them —  
The bard is a master for manhood and youth,  
Bound to instruct them in virtue and truth,  
Beholden and bound.

EU. But is virtue a sound?

Can any mysterious virtue be found  
In bombastical, huge, hyperbolical phrase?

ÆS. Thou dirty, calamitous wretch, recollect  
That exalted ideas of fancy require  
To be clothed in a suitable vesture of phrase;  
And that heroes and gods may be fairly supposed  
Discoursing in words of a mightier import,  
More lofty by far than the children of man;  
As the pomp of apparel assign'd to their persons,  
Produced on the stage and presented to view,  
Surpasses in dignity, splendour, and lustre  
Our popular garb and domestic attire,  
A practice which nature and reason allow,  
But which you disannull'd and rejected.

EU. As how?

ÆS. When you brought forth your kings, in a villanous fashion,  
In patches and rags, as a claim for compassion.

EU. And this is a grave misdemeanour, forsooth!

ÆS. It has taught an example of sordid untruth;  
For the rich of the city, that ought to equip,  
And to serve with, a ship, are appealing to pity,  
Pretending distress — with an overworn dress.

B. By Jove, so they do; with a waistcoat brand new,  
Worn closely within, warm and new for the skin;  
And if they escape in this beggarly shape,  
You'll meet 'em at market, I warrant 'em all,  
Buying the best at the fishmonger's stall.

ÆS. He has taught every soul to sophisticate truth;  
And debauch'd all the bodies and minds of the youth;  
Leaving them morbid, and pallid, and spare;  
And the places of exercise vacant and bare:—  
The disorder has spread to the fleet and the crew;  
The service is ruin'd, and ruin'd by you —  
With prate and debate in a mutinous state;  
Whereas, in my day, 'twas a different way;  
Nothing they said, nor knew nothing to say,  
But to call for their porridge and cry, ' Pull away.'

\* \* \* \* \*

ÆS. Can the reprobate mark, in the course he has run,  
One crime unattempted, a mischief undone?  
With his horrible passions, of sisters and brothers,  
And sons-in-law tempted by villanous mothers,  
And temples defiled with a bastardly birth,  
And women, divested of honour or worth,  
That talk about life as "a death upon earth;"  
And sophistical frauds and rhetorical bawds;  
Till now the whole state is infested with tribes  
Of scriveners and scribblers, and rascally scribes—  
All practice of masculine vigour and pride,  
Our wrestling and running, are all laid aside,  
And we see that the city can hardly provide  
For the Feast of the Founder, a racer of force  
To carry the torch and accomplish a course."

## X.

The *Ecclesiazusæ*, which was brought out about 392 B.C., is a bold caricature of the socialistic plans that were long talked about before they were finally stated with the perfection of literary art by Plato in his *Republic*. The women have determined to capture the public assembly in order to pass a law placing the control of the state in their hands. They consequently get up early, array themselves in their husbands' clothes, fasten on false beards, and before the men can find proper garments the women have voted to oust them from the government. This first part of the play is full of amusing, if coarse, comedy; in the second half the women exhibit a delightful wildness. No sooner have they obtained command than they become wildly lawless, and Aristophanes points out, with great plainness, the disturbing effect of practical socialism. To the end, it will be noticed, the poet remains a sturdy and militant conservative, who pathetically struggles against the tendencies of his time, against the weakening virtue and the failing forces of Athens.

In the last play, the *Plutus*, which had been brought out earlier, in 408 B.C., and in its present form twenty years later, in 388 B.C., we see the effects of the peace and the oligarchy in behalf of which Aristophanes had fought all his life. Among the changes that they produce is the suppression of the ancient comedy. It had shown itself a tremendous means of attack. The license that it had required from the Dionysiac festivals had proved a dangerous, if ineffectual, weapon, that left deep wounds even if it did not kill. After the melancholy end of the war, and the capture of Athens by Lysander, in 404 B.C., the government of the Thirty forbade the parabasis, and reference to contemporary events or to living persons by name. This law put an end to the old comedy, and in its place arose what is called the middle comedy, which in time developed into the new comedy, which concerned itself with private life and domestic scenes and characters. In other words, comedy ceased to be a part of Greek life in which public matters were discussed and denounced; it became a literary work, a work of art. This is an enormous step, although it is one that the conventional form of most of our modern literature disables us from judging as it deserves. We are so accustomed to literature that for centuries has grown up as an art that any form that has served to portray life as it is and the emotions that do not have to be acquired out of books is almost incomprehensible.

Other things led to the change. The material ruin diminished the amount that could be spent on the chorus, and from that time the

comedy changed materially. What the middle comedy was may be conjectured from the only example of it that has reached us, the *Plutus* of Aristophanes. Here at once we are confronted with abstract personification. There are no more of the cutting vilifications of living men, although it is yet Aristophanes who writes, and there must have been many who detested the keenness of his satire, which is scarcely less effective for abusing whole classes of citizens.

The play opens with *Chremylus* on the stage and his slave *Carion*, who explain that the master, being puzzled by the prosperity of the vicious and the low state of the virtuous, has been to consult the oracle of *Apollo* as to whether it would not be advisable for him to bring up his son as a rascal if he wishes to fit him well for this life. The god in answer has bidden him to follow the first person whom he meets on leaving the temple. This person is the god of wealth, *Plutus*. He is blind, having been robbed of his sight by *Zeus*, out of ill will toward mankind, "For when I was young," he explains, "I threatened to go only to the just, wise, and well-behaved; so he blinded me that I might not be able to distinguish any of these." He further says in answer to questioning, that if he should recover his sight he would once more shun the wicked and seek the good, for it's a long time since I have seen these last. "That's not surprising," says *Chremylus*, "for neither have I, and my sight is good." *Chremylus* promises to restore the blind god's vision, although the deity fears the wrath of *Zeus*; he is consoled, however, when the infinite power of riches is explained to him. For money rules the world; men grow weary of love, bread, music, sweetmeats, honor, cheese-cakes, valor, dried figs, ambition, barley-cake, military command, lentil soup, but never of money. "If a man has accumulated thirteen talents, he is only the more anxious to get sixteen. And when he has done this he yearns for forty, or he says that life is not worth living." Astute observers have seen something of the same kind in modern times.

All of these things are brought out in a brilliant, swift, conversational exchange of question and answer which foreboded the pure dialogues of the younger men.

*Plutus* consents to remain with *Chremylus*, who summons his neighbors to take part in his good fortune. These men are the chorus. In order to perform his part of the engagement, *Chremylus* is anxious to have *Plutus* pass a night in the temple of *Æsculapius*, but they are prevented by a woman who turns out to be *Poverty*, and we are in the full stream of allegory. This familiar deity proves that, by encouraging toil, she it is who really does the world good; when men are poor, they are free from vices; poor orators are just, it is only when they have become rich that they are vicious, but *Chremylus* refuses to be con-



vinced, even if she convince him, and he drives her away. She says that some day or other he will be sending for her. "Then you will come fast enough," is his reply. Meanwhile he will enjoy his wealth.

The god is freed from his blindness, the account which Chremylus gives his wife of the cure serving as an excellent opportunity for ridicule of those butts of comic writers, the physicians. Plutus and Chremylus at once become very popular, now that everything goes well.

Then follow a succession of scenes to represent the altered condition of things, after the usual method of Aristophanes. A just man seeks to have his coffers, emptied by his generosity, once more filled. The informer comes to grief. The rich old woman is shamed. Finally Hermes appears, having abandoned Zeus, to take service with Plutus and Chremylus. He thinks that he will fare better in his new place, and he is devoured by hunger, now that men have ceased to worship anything but wealth. A priest of Zeus also comes in to aid, offers his services to the new religion, and with this final victory the play ends.

Of the other plays of Aristophanes only a few fragments are left; it is from the eleven pieces just briefly described that an opinion of the old Athenian comedy must be formed. Even the best translations suffer from the evaporation of his brilliant style, and of his wit which covers all forms from the pun to the most extravagant invention. The fact that he was absolutely out-spoken distinguishes him from all other writers of comedy. There was nothing that he could not say; ribaldry had no terrors for him, and this frankness of speech was but part of the absolute freedom which he enjoyed. No subject was too sacred; the men in power, the follies of the Athenians, their fickleness and weaknesses were legitimate objects of his wit. The comedy was, in fact, an important constituent of the Athenian state, not a literary luxury, as it has too often been in modern times. It represented, one might almost say, the public conscience, and as a man's conscience freely discusses all his deeds without fear or favor, so the wit of Aristophanes played over the whole state, correcting, purging, deriding, and guiding. This coherence of the comic theatre with the national life explains what later generations have blamed in the pieces of Aristophanes; for only when literature becomes conventional may it artificially be adapted to suit the requirements of taste. So long as it is living, conventions have no power over it.

Extracts and descriptions do no sufficient justice to the personal quality of the poet's style. Much of his wit, many of his allusions to contemporary circumstances, are lost to us through our meagre knowledge of the affairs concerned, but enough is left to delight us. The terrible keenness of the wit of Aristophanes is most striking; nothing,

for instance, could exceed the force of letting Cleisthenes, in the Thesmophoriazusæ, appear among the women assembled for sacred rites, when all the men were rigidly excluded. He was so notoriously effeminate that he was not accounted a man. The treatment of Cleon is a notorious example of the same bitterness. As to the fun, nothing more need be said. The mechanical presentation of the jokes is an important element. This is exemplified by the appearance of Socrates in a basket "among the clouds," and in the Peace by the way in which that goddess is hauled out of the pit by the different nations. First, the Bœotians will not pull, then the Argives are sullen, then the Megarians; it is not until the rustics get hold that the goddess stirs. When it is remembered that these drastic, vivid images were accom-



CONVENTIONAL COMEDY FIGURES.

panied with a dialogue and with a wealth of lyric verse, one may faintly imagine the vividness of the pictures presented to the delighted Athenians. The thousand-sidedness of the poet, the manifold applicability of his wit, place him among the eternals,

But all these piecemeal definitions of his qualities, and the skeletons of his plays with a few stray shreds hanging on them, desiccated in translation, fail to give a sufficient impression of the vast importance of this great man. The dissection of his character into separate characteristics, the examination and classification of the subdivisions of his boundless wit and enthusiasm fail to represent his bulk and prominence, just as the words in a dictionary fail to convey an adequate notion of the style of a good writer. It was the cumulative force of



these manifold powers that made Aristophanes so imposing a personage. He represents not wit or satire, but half of the divided spirit of Athens, and to speak of him merely as a great writer is to do him but scant justice. In fact, eminent as were his literary achievements and those of his illustrious contemporaries, the age of literature had not begun; that came later, when the significance of writers as men sank beneath the importance of their style or grace, or good taste. Wherein Aristophanes is great is as the personification of an important part of the Athenian people: his hatred of the destructive war, his detestation of the new intellectual ferment, his love of Æschylus and the former grandeur of Athens, his abhorrence of the democracy, are beyond and outside of his personal feelings; they count as the expression of a large part of an eager people, just as truly as the sublimity of Æschylus is the direct resultant of the lofty confidence of the successful city, and the vividness of Euripides is Athens ripened by disaster.

While nothing is more marked than the intensity of the feeling of which he was the mouthpiece, nothing is more tragic than the apparent failure of this comedian's earnest effort to put back the hands of the clock. Everything that wit and intellectual force could supply was brought to bear against the irresistible force of events, but without other result than to slacken somewhat the speed of their movement. The aim that Aristophanes represented was a hopeless one; and its only effect may be seen in the satisfaction with which the later Athenians regarded their past; and the brilliancy of the hopeless contest that he waged is the measure of the opposition, as we see in Euripides a good part of the feeling against which it contended. With its wisdom we have nothing to do, but we might as well expect to be able to overlook the force of inertia in physics as not to find conservatism in human affairs.

To be sure conservatism does not always have an Aristophanes fighting for it, nor is it always opposed by a Euripides, although some such contest is always going on. Here it is its intensity that is most striking. We are all so accustomed to finding some of the qualities of the Golden Age ascribed to this period, that insensibly there has grown up a tolerably distinct impression of the Athenians as a number of literary and artistic enthusiasts who knew no guile, and no blacker feeling than such as enlivened a vigorous competition in intellectual work. Yet, Aristophanes shows very clearly how much humanity there was in human nature at this time, and how widespread the turmoil and confusion that one might imagine to have been delicious sympathy and smoothness. The mistake very naturally results from the easy exaggeration of the merits everywhere conspicuous in Greek



work, or at least through a very easy transition from its merits to the virtues of those who did the work, and have been readily raised to the rank of demi-gods. This exaggeration has been much aided by the fact that the knowledge of Greek has been a privilege of, one might almost say, a caste that has never been averse to magnifying the importance of its acquirements, and so readily falls into over-enthusiasm. The glory of the Greeks throws a brilliant light on those who are familiar with what they did, and separates them from the common herd, and they have readily assigned to the ancient Greeks qualities which they imagined that they themselves possessed, and first among these was immunity from the ordinary weaknesses of human nature.

In fact, however, there is no time of ideal perfection ; always and everywhere good work connotes hot opposition, and here the conflict raged between two parties of something like equal ability. In Aristophanes we see the beginning of the end, with his abhorrence of the present and his adoration of the irrevocable past. All that was new he detested, and he struggled against every change, continually uttering the advice which seemed simple enough, though it was impossible : to repeat what had been done in the awakening after the Persian wars. He held himself aloof from what he regarded as new heresies, yet he could not escape the influence of the age in which he lived. Its spirit was in the very air he breathed as well as Euripides, and in spite of all his efforts he too paid his tribute to the interests of his time. We see this illustrated by the appearance in his comedies of individual characters alongside of such allegorical abstractions as Peace, Tumult, Demos, and Dicæopolis, or Bdelycleon ; and it is even more visible in the acknowledgment of the existence of a new spirit that animates his denunciation of its perils. Whereas Euripides was contented with the opportunity that its presence gave him for independent thought, Aristophanes saw how ill it agreed with the former supremacy of Athens. He foresaw that the old limits could not contain what really required the making over of the whole civilized world before it should find its proper home, and consequently he despaired. It is this despair which gives his wit the poignant sadness of a jest uttered on a deathbed. It is as pathetic as the powerless eloquence of Demosthenes or the wise folly of Plato. Nor is it sad only in the light of subsequent history ; his note is that of one who has undertaken an impossible and hopeless task.

In the *Plutus*, as has been said, there is a change ; not only in the characters who are distinguished by the possession of proper names, vague creations, but in the *Informer*, the *Old Woman*, etc., we find types, not persons, and it may not be unfair to suppose that the

authority of Aristophanes has in the past furnished encouragement to that unvivid form of composition. Before the end of the Peloponnesian war, the comedy, as a part of the functions of the state, had a great political value; after that time it gradually shrivelled into a means of amusement. Yet the Greeks remained Greeks, even when Hellas ceased to be Hellas. Their literary taste did not die with their political supremacy. The great animating principle vanished, but the comedy became something that we can admire, although it survives only in fragments and imitations; these possess the charm of perfect work, from which we can guess the original beauty, just as we find the traces of artistic wonder in the scanty ruins of a Greek city. They all bear the touch of the artist: a single word uttered by a beautiful voice tells us what the voice is. †

## XI.

The middle comedy, to adopt an old but possibly pedantic distinction, was an adaptation of the comedy to its new conditions. From the discussion of affairs of state it turned to the subjects that alone interested a defeated people, to personal jests, to ridicule of the current philosophy, to portraying manners and forms of thought. Parody became a popular form. The names of forty writers have come down to us, but of their work we have to judge from the titles and a handful of fragments. From these we may gather that with the extinction of the political and wider ethical tendencies of the comedy there survived what is but a subordinate part of the plays of Aristophanes, namely, the amusing representation of familiar types. Thus, parasites and tradespeople were continually derided. Authors were caricatured, not as in the *Frogs*, with reference to their influence on the state, but merely with regard to their literary skill. The philosophers were laughed at, but merely for their personal eccentricities, not for their perilous teachings.

Gradually the middle comedy developed into the new comedy, which abandoned the treatment of general vague types, those of the street and market-place, as we may call them, for the domestic comedy which dealt with complications of family life, thus establishing the laws of comedy down to the present time. This change in the purview of comedy from the criticism of large questions of politics and social ethics to the discussion of the affairs of private life, was one that belongs strictly to the inevitable processes of literature. We saw a similar modification of the tragedy, from the grand elemental simplicity of Æschylus, with his lofty ethical purpose, through the more human rendering of Sophocles, to the complicated manipulation of



Euripides, who seeks to express the infinite variety of the nature of men and women, and his perversion of the old myths. The uniform tendency of both tragedy and comedy was from the application of general principles to the study of individual interests and complications. The analogy between the development of the tragedy and that of the modern novel has been already spoken of; when for the tragedy we substitute the comedy, the change becomes even clearer. From the vague teachings of honor and chivalry in the old romances to the modern study of individuals the path is clear and straight, and in the development of the treatment of the individual during the last century we may see the same process going on with ever greater thoroughness.

The most celebrated writers of the new comedy, which lasted from about 340 B.C. to 260 B.C., were Philemon and Menander, whose works are unfortunately lost, so that it is necessary to judge of them from the extracts and from the Roman imitations made by Plautus and Terence. As to the fragments, it is as if posterity were to form an opinion of the English dramatists from the illustrative extracts in Johnson's and Richardson's dictionaries. A manuscript of Menander's plays is said to have existed in Italy shortly before the invention of printing, but if this statement is true, the manuscript is lost and probably for ever. This author was born in Athens in the year 342 B.C., the year in which Epicurus was born, and he flourished in the period that followed the death of Alexander the Great. He died in 291 B.C. Philemon was a contemporary of his, and lived nearly a century. While Philemon secured more praise from his contemporaries than did his rival, it is to the more refined wit of Menander that posterity turned with the greater admiration. Curiously enough, it was not his reputation as a wit that inspired the collection of extracts that were made by his admirers, so much as a respect for the wisdom of his wise moral sayings. The compactness and literary refinement of these were great. Yet as a comedian he delighted every one. His plays were vivid representations of the decaying society of his time. The subordinate position of reputable women kept them out of the plays as out of public view, just as unmarried girls are not the subject of modern French novels, and assert their prominence in American fiction as they do in American life. Menander's *dramatis personæ* consisted of courtesans, slaves, market-men, youths and their fathers, the familiar figures of every-day life in that city that had lost its political importance, while the keen intelligence of the Athenians still survived with no sufficient aim to inspire or direct it. The mere enjoyment of life had taken the place of a willing or enforced political energy; the men simply lived, devoted to pleasure, and to an elegant diletantism. What in mod-



ern life we see common to a small number of idle and aimless rich men, was there the rule. The vast body of slaves supported the free population in comparative luxury, affording them, at the best, leisure for the indulgence of intellectual tastes. Hence nothing was more



MENANDER.  
(Statue in the Vatican.)

popular than this new comedy, with its marvellous literary brilliancy, its refinement and ingenuity, as well as its constant allusion, not so much to the facts of life as to the possibilities of the current life of

the time. This literary quality is one that must be continually borne in mind. Absolute realism demands in the writer, and consequently in the society in which he lives, firm belief in the people and scenes described. The cynical and wearied public to which Menander belonged, and for which he wrote, believed only in the necessity of amusement; they would have cared as little to have the unrelenting grimness of life represented in a play as to find it disturbing their selfish, pleasure-loving existence; what they demanded was everything that observation and ingenuity could devise for puzzling their keen wits, while flattering and entertaining them. They knew no real interests, no hot enthusiasms, and any presentation of them would have been as much out of place as would a court-suit at a modern political caucus. The bluntness of Aristophanes revolted them; the love of polish and refinement held them in as firm a grip as the force of etiquette holds conventional people—indeed, the two are twin brothers; and the intellectual astuteness that developed the possible intricacies of an ingenious plot alone delighted them. They praised Menander's truth to nature, and justly, but it was the nature that they alone knew. The influence of this inspired the Roman comedians, as has been said, and thus formed the most important model for the reviving comedy of the Renaissance, and we may see in much modern comedy how well ingenuity of invention has thrived when higher interests were silent. Indeed, just as the melodrama of the romantic movement exaggerated the emotions and aspirations of that period, so the new comedy represented with corresponding inexactness the wit and intellectual curiosity of the age of Menander.

Not only does its contrast with the comedy of Aristophanes make vivid the difference between a period when literature is the utterance of people living and one when the political feeling is extinct, it also marks the opening of a new epoch when literature became literary. That it should ever be anything else may seem at first sight the height of paradox, especially when for centuries the aim of all cultivation has been to produce something that should be true to abstract principles of art, and hence as remote from life as everything intentionally unreal must always be. Still, these false ideals have shown signs of disappearance, and it has become evident that even artificial flowers may fade, long-lived as they have proved to be. In other words, in this comedy we have the beginning of a period when literature showed itself as an art, a device for entertainment, instead of an expression of the people thinking, and for more than two thousand years its main excellence has been held to lie in this accidental quality. The one test that has been continually applied has been the accordance of the method of saying things with rules drawn from the examples of other utterances;



their direct excellence has been infinitely less regarded. It has been supposed that outside of the relation of things there existed an inherent quality in the words themselves and in their arrangement which, when properly supervised, made literature. Hence have arisen such familiar notions as poetic diction, poetic license, and the countless petrifications that are catalogued in books on rhetoric. The rules of good taste have been established by literary legislators, as if what is called



CHARACTER MASKS IN THE NEW GREEK COMEDY.

good taste were anything but the raw edge, the vanishing line, of our sympathies, and only what lies inside this limit has been adjudged to be the proper domain of literature. The early Greeks knew no such boundaries; with them literature was, as it should be, as broad as life itself; belief and doubt, joy and sorrow, enthusiasm and contempt, all



found natural expression without reference to a literary code. Consider for a moment the intellectual fertility of Aristophanes, with what freedom from trammels he praises and denounces, how unfettered his choice, whether he speaks of private or public wrong, caricatures Euripides or the whole people of Athens, and sings the glories of the past. Every man had the same choice ; nothing was too high or too low for the Greek to mention ; it was only necessary that anything should have existed as fact or thought, to have its literary expression justified.

In the middle ages we see something very like the same exemption from *a priori* limitations, combined, however, with a crudity which the Greeks never knew. Yet, even this race, obviously, felt the tendency of excellent work to acquire authority over later men ; but while the general current moved in certain set forms, intellectual freedom existed as long as its twin-brother, political freedom, lasted. It is only in strict obedience to natural causes that the fewer, because earlier, intellectual interests of the Greeks should have left an insufficient number of models for future copying. The complications of modern life have augmented the demand for outlets of expression, in exactly the same way that the fine arts have developed in directions unsuspected by Greek sculptors, and that modern politics has to grapple with problems undreamed of by Plato and Aristotle, and that philosophy and science have snapped their old bonds ; every change has required an enlargement of the old outlets. Yet it is notorious that a strong tendency has always existed to force men to keep to the former methods, and that now the man who says that properly literature is as great as life speaks heresy, for it is thought that literature can only exist in or near what for the Greeks, to be sure, was freedom, but is a narrow field for modern men.

Nevertheless, to say that these men who seek to limit the methods of expression are actuated by the best principles is unnecessary ; they have the good of letters near at heart. They fervently believe that salvation lies only in listening to them, and they have behind them centuries of progress at which they can and do "point with pride." To say that their opinions have had a long life is only another way of saying that they are or have been serviceable and inevitable, but it would be hasty to affirm that literature can always be controlled by the rules drawn from the study of the works of the past. The last century undermined general principles that had been commonly accepted ; the present one is turning its nefarious attention to axioms in geometry, metaphysics, and science, and universally we may observe the tendency of scientific thought to outrun its limits and to make its way into every department of intellectual activity, so that the notion

that literature must concern itself only with things of apparent beauty meets many foes who ask annoying questions about what beauty is, where one must stand to determine it, whether agreement can be found about it, and, finally, whether what is called beauty is in fact any thing more than the expression of the limitations of any man's comprehension. It may in time be seen that the only test to be applied is that of the truth of the delineation, and that arbitrary exclusion is as impossible for literature as it is for thought.

Certainly, those who are most ready to deny these suggestions will agree that Aristophanes is the first of comedians. The very cornerstone of their views is the enormous superiority of the Greeks, whom we are bidden ever to imitate; yet, to take that writer alone, his plays abound with matter that completely contradicts their notions of good taste. Of that quality he took no account; even the name did not then exist; it was the life of his time that inspired him, with all its thousand interests, pettinesses, weaknesses, and enthusiasms, not a code of laws. It was Menander who stands as the best representative of the graciousness of the tamer methods. To call him the first, however, would be inexact, because, in fact, so gradual are the processes of growth that no one man is ever really the first to do anything; already in Euripides we may perceive the paraphernalia of tragedy lying heavy upon his brisk treatment of contemporary men and women, just as in Shakspeare's *As You Like It*, the conventional dramatic form is at times an awkward encumbrance for the lightness of the comedy, as when (act ii., scene iii.) Adam offers his services to Orlando:

"I have five hundred crowns,  
The thrifty hire I saved under your father,  
Which I did store to be my foster-nurse  
When service should in my old limbs lie lame  
And unregarded age in corners thrown:  
Take that, and He that doth the ravens feed,  
Yea, providently caters for the sparrow,  
Be comfort to my age! Here is the gold;  
All this I give you. Let me be your servant:" etc., etc.,

when the speech wears a heavy load of conventional rhetoric.

Menander freed himself of what was cumbersome for Euripides, and it is easy to see that his grace and lightness could not fail to delight his contemporaries and successors. Wit and wisdom were the indistinguishable qualities of his plays, for they were combined in a most attractive clearness that well represented the alert thought and lucid expression of the Athenians. And at once the vivid pictures of society, the infallible touch which he laid on human weaknesses, the graceful allusions that praised or blamed, with infinite tact, acquired that charm which exquisite work always exercises on sensitive souls.



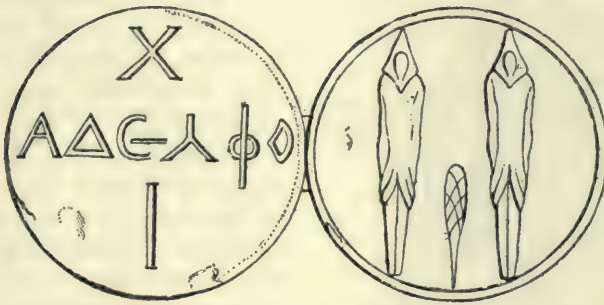
By its side the tremendous, untiring greatness of Aristophanes seemed a coarse natural power without fascination. We all know the contrast. The bane of literature has long been that it has blinded its admirers to the world, which by its side appears rank and vulgar.

At the moment when Menander was writing, the active life of Hellas had come to an end, and instead of its past glory there existed a pride in one form of intellectual activity, in literary excellence, which at once acquired authority over every existing and following civilization. This is not to be wondered at; yet it must be remembered that it was the literary literature, so to speak, that held this position rather than that which was the direct expression of life. It was that to which Rome succumbed, and that has come into the control of modern tastes.

Euripides, as we have seen, was Menander's intellectual father; it was from him that he inherited his literary style and a tireless interest in contemporary life. The laws of tragedy limited the older poet to the field of venerable myths, but they could not restrain him from treating these in a familiar way. The prominence that he gave to women in his plays, and the great weight that he laid on human passion, paved the way for Menander. Thus, what could be further from the old tragedy than Medea's wail over the miserable lot of women who have to buy a husband with a large dowry? If the marriage is an unhappy one, she goes on, the wife must pine away at home, while the husband is free to seek distraction without. In the *Andromache*, again, Hermione warns husbands against the danger of letting other women visit freely his wife, whom they will fill with pernicious ideas. It was modern Athens, and no land of heroes and heroines, that he had in mind. Although tragedy thus ventured on the territory of comedy, comedy left untouched the nobler side of human nature, and treated only the vices and weaknesses of society. Its first duty was to amuse, and the correction of faults was carefully hidden beneath the effort to entertain. The plots were simple: the young man of fortune would be hopelessly in love with some unworthy woman who would turn out to be the daughter of some free-born citizen, and the demands of respectability would be at once appeased. The discovery, too, would be made by the advent of some stranger who took the place of the *deus ex machina* who was let down from heaven to unravel the plots of Euripides. Some such little surprise the spectator knew beforehand that he would find in the play, just as the inveterate reader of French novels knows that he will find some complications between man, wife, and lover in the yellow-covered story that is sure to present the old plot in a slightly different light. In both cases the artificiality is hidden by intellectual cleverness.



In Menander, too, we find, as his statue promises, a man of the world—seeing and judging with decorous sadness what goes on before him. He is wholly without the illusions that alone inspire the tragedian whose work has merit only when faith in principles survives the defeat of human agents. He who writes comedies of society can best record the smallness of men. It is when the world is most hopeful that the grandest tragedies are written, and when men have lost all confidence in themselves that they are disposed to describe and smile at their own pettinesses. In this way the new comedy of Athens reflects the decaying glories of the state, just as the full vigor of the Aristophanic comedy represents a period of intense zeal and enthusiasm not yet crushed by defeat.



THEATRE CHECK.

## BOOK IV.—THE HISTORIANS.

### CHAPTER I.—HERODOTUS.

I.—The Origin of Prose—The Predecessors of Herodotus. II.—Herodotus, his Life, his Travels—His Methods, his Object—The Criticisms of his Work—His Stories—His Authorities. III.—Extracts.

#### I.

It is not merely convenience that causes this long delay in speaking of the prose writings of the Greeks. With them, as with every race,



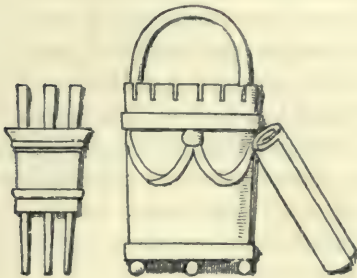
CLIO, A MUSE OF HISTORY.

poetical composition long preceded that in the more difficult prose; the earliest expressions are constantly rhythmical ones. The reason is not far to seek. Darwin, in his "Expression of the Emotions," says that he believes that "the habit of uttering musical sounds was first developed as a means of courtship in the early progenitors of man, and thus became associated with the strongest emotions of which they are capable—namely, ardent love, rivalry and triumph," and he infers "that the progenitors of man probably uttered musical tones before they had acquired articulate speech, and that consequently, when the voice is used under any strong emotion, it tends to assume, through the principle of association, a musical

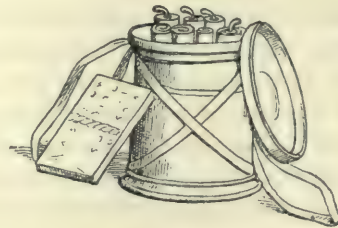
character." Thus the earliest utterances, being those of a martial, ama-

tory, or religious kind, at any rate being inspired by a strong emotion, would naturally find a rhythmical expression. We may notice the peculiar chanting with which any uncultivated person will make a statement when under great excitement, and the natural tendency of religious enthusiasm to make use of the same forms. Consequently we everywhere find some form of verse preceding prose. The first expressions of early men are produced in excitement and assume a rhythmical form; it is only later that prose, the first breath of science, we may call it, is produced. Moreover, the infinite difficulty of writing in prose is most baffling to men who are borne along on the swing of a rhythmical line as is the swimmer by a wave; writers who are accustomed to the aid that is given by the ornament that verse employs as its right, are powerless when left face to face with the raw facts, just as a shy person may dance boldly in a ball-room across which he would dread to walk.

While every race has gone through at least some part of the same experience, even now prose remains an almost unattained art in German and English, and the story of its growth in Greece will illustrate the awkwardness of its beginning and the difficulty with which this is dispelled. Naturally enough, it was first employed with the



THREE STILUSES, BOX, ROLL.



WOODEN TABLET AND BOX OF ROLLS WITH HORN ENDS.

acquisition of the art of writing; before words could be recorded in some lasting way, every hymn, every chronicle, every story depended on its hold upon the memory for its existence, and the best chance of survival lay in adaptability to the memory. Here poetry had the advantage of prose, and we may not be astray in regarding the importance of poetry, or at least much of its traditional authority, as simply the result of convenience. It was originally in good part a mnemonic device. Just when the Greeks learned the art of writing is uncertain, but it is sure that it cannot be until a late date, until the time of Peisistratus, that it became common, when a cheap and convenient



material for receiving marks was found in papyrus. Before this was introduced from Egypt, the necessity of employing a sheep's skin rendered composition an unwieldy process, and to the absence of a convenient medium and to the necessity of securing the portability of literature by aid of its form we may ascribe the long prevalence of verse. Prose, it has often been said, arose late in Greece; the reason we have seen in the lack of material for writing; one result we may take to be the importance of poetry in modern times. What was once a useful device has become by association a legitimate means of expression that rests on the authority of the early conditions of Greek civilization. All modern literature for centuries made over that of Rome, just as the Roman made over that of Greece, and the first models have triumphed in two separate civilizations.

The first prose was naturally very simple. The fables and proverbs, which are to be found in every early civilization, resembled the common talk of the people. Here compression and epigram facilitated the memory, and their existence alongside of poetry repeats itself in modern times in, for example, the metrical rules for playing whist and the compressed directions which are enforced upon every beginner. The abundant use of proverbial phrases among races of moderate civilization, as the Spanish, discloses a similar condition of things.

The art of writing first took root apparently among the Ionians in Asia Minor. Miletus was the most important of the cities established in a remote antiquity by Ionic emigration from Hellas to the fertile region where touch was had with older and riper civilization, and where apparently the arts of peace attained early development in the absence of a disturbing struggle for the solution of political problems. There in the absence of these distractions which tend to call away the energy of the people from intellectual matters, just as the money-making of this country lessens the amount of time and interest that can be given to unlucrative study, a high degree of maturity and refinement began to appear at a very early date, when the mother country was still in the process of emerging from rude obscurity. Possibly the general swift development of the Grecian colonies may be ascribed in good measure to their total rupture with the antiquated conditions out of which the original states had to grow slowly and painfully, just as now the English colonies have naturally acquired a freedom from the old hereditary forms that still embarrass the more slowly moving mother country. However this may be, it was through Miletus and the other scarcely less famous Ionic cities that many advances in progress made their way into Greece. The power of Miletus was great: it had commercial relations with the countries bordering on the Mediterranean and the Euxine, and it established

numerous colonies. With their earlier maturity, these Ionic offshoots contributed largely to the intellectual development of Hellas, and the influence of Miletus appears to have been especially important. This city at last paid dearly for its proximity to the Asiatic civilizations, in wars and its capture by the Persians at the beginning of the fifth century, an event which Phrynichus celebrated in a tragedy that so wrought upon the Athenians that they fined the dramatists and forbade the further mention on the tragic stage of contemporary incidents. From that time Milesian influence over Greek literature ceased. The lost tales of Miletus belonged to a much later and less glorious age. It was here and in the neighboring Ionian cities that the early philosophers found leisure for their speculations, some doubtless employing prose, and others verse, which was by far the commonest form of conveying instruction. These men will be discussed later; of the historians, Hecataeus, a Milesian, was the most important in the influence that he had on Herodotus. He appears to have been a man of note, for we are told that he once served as an ambassador to the Persians, and was a member of an assembly of notables to discuss public affairs. His date is uncertain, but this last event took place about the year 595 B.C. At some part of his life he travelled extensively, and what he himself saw, as well as what he could learn from others, he recorded in a book called the Circuit of the Earth, of which but mere scraps have reached us. Even this first man (and nothing is firmly settled about him) had many predecessors. The abundant mythology attracted many writers, who recorded the various legends that had arisen in earlier times, for history and myth were connected by numberless indistinguishable threads. Later, the wide experience of the Ionians demanded to be chronicled. They were an active race; their merchant vessels visited every port in the Mediterranean, and the more venturesome even made their way along almost the whole coast of Europe. Others visited the great monarchies of the East; the brother of the poet Alcæus, for example, served in the army of the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar; many more belonged to the Egyptian forces; and when the art of writing was acquired, these men naturally related what they had seen and done to those who stayed at home. Yet only very little of their work survives. Cadmus of Miletus, about 576 B.C., is reputed to be one of the earliest; he is said to have written a history of his native town and of the neighboring places. Bion of Proconnesus, a younger contemporary, wrote about the early history of Ionia. Acusilaus of Argos, whose date is also uncertain, was one of the first Greeks who followed in the footsteps of the Ionians. He is said to have composed a collection of old myths in prose. Hecataeus is said to have combined these two func-



tions of a historian, the narration of myths, and the record of facts, but naturally it was only the latter that served as an authority to Herodotus. Egypt he described with considerable fullness, and indeed the later and more famous historian has been accused of simply copying from his predecessor, but the charge is only brought at a late period and by a weak authority. Among those to whom Herodotus may possibly have been indebted is Dionysius of Miletus, who wrote a history of Persia. Certain other contemporaries traverse somewhat the same ground as himself, but their misty names only show that history was well written by him when many were at work in the same direction, and do but confirm the obvious statement that he who suc-

ceeds has obscure predecessors and rivals. In fact, nothing can exceed the obscurity that covers these dim names.

Thus Herodotus formed the habit of travelling and describing his travels, of making researches in geography and history already formed, just as he found the Ionic dialect in current use among these writers at whose head he at once placed himself by his delightful book. What contributed to the greatness of the change from what might almost be called the local histories of the earlier men to this important contribution to the science of history was the vastness of his subject, the account, namely, of the wars between Greece and the East. We have seen the enormous influence that this conflict had upon the political constitution of Hellas and, more vividly, the expression of this change in the dramatic literature; in the importance of the work of Herodotus



HERODOTUS.

we may perceive another instance of it. Yet, it is to be remembered, we find in his history the utterance not of an Athenian, but of an Asiatic Greek, who to be sure saw the momentous struggle between the west and the east, but without deriving from the spectacle the inspiration that belonged only to those who had taken part in the fray. Herodotus was a provincial, and a spectator, not one of those who had gone into the arena and ventured an almost hopeless battle, in which they had won an unexpected success. His literary inspiration came from the past; the wide difference between his work and that of Thucydides marks not merely the difference between two genera-



tions, one of which has reached maturity, while the other represents only promising adolescence; it is far more than this that one perceives—it is the distinction between the Greek with all his attractive qualities possible, and the Greek who by proving them has made his place in the world's history. A sketch of the life of Herodotus will help to illustrate this. A sketch is in fact all that is possible, in view of the paucity of incidents that can be affirmed with anything like positiveness.

## II.

He was born apparently a few years before the Persian Wars, probably at Halicarnassus, in Asia Minor. The date that is usually set is 484 B.C. His history abounds with mannerisms and inferences that indicate the extent of his early education. Homer, we know, was the foundation of a Greek's studies, and Herodotus shows thorough familiarity with the old poet, whose works long remained the great authority in literary composition, until the rhetoricians taught new and more artificial methods. The other poets, too, he knew well, for he often quotes or refers to Hesiod, Musæus, Archilochus, the later epic writers, Alcæus, Sappho, Solon, Simonides of Ceos, Phrynichus, Æschylus and Pindar. He shows also similar familiarity with the prose writers, especially with Hecataeus, whom he often corrects. As his accomplished translator and commentator, George Rawlinson, says of him, "it may be questioned whether there was a single work of importance in the whole range of Greek literature accessible to him, with the contents of which he was not fairly acquainted." His travels were no less extensive. He apparently visited Babylon, Ardericia, near Susa, remote parts of Egypt, Scythia, Colchis, Thrace, Cyrene, Zante, Dodona, and Magna Græcia; thus covering, to quote again from the same authority, "a space of thirty-one degrees of longitude (above 1700 miles) from east to west, and of twenty-four of latitude (1660 miles) from north to south." More than this: he studied carefully the regions that he traveled over; not that he knew all equally well; thus, he did not go far into Thrace, Syria, and Phœnicia, but where he pretended to have examined carefully he undoubtedly did so. Thus, in Egypt his explorations were very thorough. It is supposed that he made most of his journeys before he was forty years old, when he was a citizen of Halicarnassus, and started from the city for his various tours. About 447 B.C., Halicarnassus joined the Athenian confederacy, and towards that time Herodotus visited Athens, which was then the leading city in Greece. Here he speedily became famous; we are told that he read his history aloud to the Athenians, though

how and when is not recorded. It is said, too, it will be remembered, that he gave a public reading at the Olympic games, when Thucydides was a listener and was much moved. This report, however, is doubted, and it appears too much like the many vivid anecdotes that adorn the literary history of Greece, in which anything likely to be impressive is narrated as a fact. That Thucydides might well have met Herodotus at Athens is extremely probable, and it is very likely that Sophocles made the acquaintance of the stranger from Halicarnassus, and various coincidences have been noted between the utterances of these two men; some, doubtless, are such as may be best explained more simply as due merely to the fact that they were contemporaries, who found similar answers awaiting the same questions, but others seem to justify the inference of intimacy between the two men. Thus Herodotus (iii. 119) represents Intaphernes apologizing for asking the life of her brother, rather than of her husband and children, with these words: "God willing, I might yet find, O king, another husband and other children, should I lose these, but now that my father and mother have died I can never have another brother." A statement that reminds one of the king of England, who had to choose between saving the life of his wife and of his child, and urged that the child be saved, because he was sure that he could at any time get another wife. In the *Antigone*, ll. 909-912, we find:

"And dost thou ask what law constrained me thus?  
I answer, Had I lost a husband dear,  
I might have had another; other sons  
By other spouse, if one were lost to me;  
But when my father and my mother sleep  
In Hades, then no brother more can come."

In the *Æd. Col.*, 337, Sophocles refers to a custom of Egypt, mentioned by Herodotus, according to which the men sat weaving at home while the women earned their bread abroad. In the *Æd. Rex*, 1227, the poet speaks of Phasis and Iotros, rivers running into the Euxine, which Herodotus had seen. Elsewhere we find similarities of opinion on questions of morals and ethics. Obviously, it is only the accumulation of coincidences that can establish anything like conviction of anything more than a natural agreement in the thought of their time. In view of the evidence, we are, perhaps, justified in supposing an intimate personal relation between the two men, especially in view of the fact that nothing would be more likely, and that Sophocles wrote a poem in honor of Herodotus, of which Plutarch has preserved the opening words; it is of course possible that the elegy referred to some other person of the same name. Later, in the year 443 B.C., Herodotus made his way to Thurium, as one of the colonists whom Pericles sent



thither. Here, apparently, he devoted himself to the completion and improvement of his work. This process seems to have gone on until the author's death. When this last event occurred is uncertain; the dates suggested vary between 430 and 394. The place is equally a matter of conjecture and consequent dispute.

One of the first things that the student notices in reading Herodotus is the simplicity of his style. It is like talk, not like literary composition, reminding one more of the simple, unaffected prose of Joinville and Sir John Mandeville than of anything else. While poetry had grown up through a period of artificiality, in which its first function as a bit of religious ceremony had survived, so that directness would have seemed like irreverence, prose began, where it is destined to end, with a likeness to simple oral narration. The end of the middle ages can alone show us a similar result; for all our modern prose, from the days of Boccaccio to those of the most complicated German book, is tainted with an effort to copy the artificial construction of a Latin sentence. While English prose has in a good measure lost the most marked traces of this literary origin, enough remains to make its genealogy clear. Later, as we shall notice, Attic prose was poisoned by the conventionalities of the rhetoricians, who made the usual error of confounding obscurity with wisdom. Yet, even in them we find perhaps scarcely anything but a more conventional treatment of the method already employed in Herodotus, which arose from his imitation of the Homeric poems. The habit of letting history tell itself dramatically, as it were, through speeches placed in the mouths of the actors concerned, is the most vivid example of this tendency. In Herodotus this device retains all its primeval simplicity; later it became as artificial as is the use of the hexameter in modern poetry. It makes itself manifest more especially in the episodes with which the history is continuously lightened. Continually, too, the movement of the sentences and the words employed remind one of the epic poems. In the matter of style Herodotus is far superior to his predecessors and contemporaries, who wrote with a simplicity that is extraordinarily graceless.

Of course Herodotus has not held his high position without receiving abundant criticism; he has been continually blamed for not being some one else, and for the unsatisfactoriness with which he meets the questions suggested by modern science. His belief in divine interference, however, which is sometimes objected to, proves nothing more than that he lived in a time when scepticism had not destroyed faith in the oracles. Even in books written at the present day we continually find the statement that such or such events, generally those in the remote past, were divinely arranged for the furtherance of certain





objects, and Herodotus is less disposed to explain recent events by such a hypothesis. Elsewhere, too, he prefers to account for things that have happened by a rationalistic explanation, as in the seventh book, § 191, he ascribes the cessation of a storm, not to the sacrifices of the Magi, but to the fact that the tempest had spent itself. Still it is easy to deny the efficacy of strange deities, and it is undeniably true that Herodotus shared the beliefs of his time and country which are called superstitions when they are outgrown. His notion of a blind but remorseless Nemesis, that looked upon human success as simply a growth that demanded reproof and punishment, is one that yet survives in the familiar phrase, "tempting Providence," and was continually referred to by early and late Greek and Roman poets and prose-writers. The strangeness of the defeat of the Persians not unnaturally inspired the Greeks with the thought that they had been aided by the gods, and if Herodotus carried this view further than his maturer Athenian companions, we must remember that he was distinctly a provincial. It is urged that to make facts go on all fours with this explanation he is apt to ascribe great events to minute and trifling causes, to the conduct of individual men; this is doubtless true. He does explain vaster movements as the result of some personal feeling, but how about our contemporaries in this respect? Are not those who affirm any other cause for human progress charged with injustice to individuality? What is the lesson of Carlyle's view of history? Mr. Froude, it will be remembered, ascribes the growth of ritualism in the Church of England to a whim of Cardinal Newman's, forgetting the general mediæval revival of the time in architecture, painting, and literature; and Sainte-Beuve lays exaggerated weight on the fact that the mother of André Chénier was a Greek woman when he explains the way in which that poet partook of the revival of Greek studies at the end of the last century.

That Herodotus should have taught historical lessons by means of personal anecdotes is natural enough in view of the popularity of fables as a means of conveying moral instruction. The authority of the epic poems also encouraged that way of regarding history, and the isolation of the Greek cities helped to establish it. It was only through the united effort that was enforced by the Persian attack that the Greeks learned how much power lay in great principles, and that a wider view of history became possible. Herodotus made a step in advance of his predecessors when he conceived the story of the great war as a possible subject beyond the mere aggregation of more or less accurate statistics. These statistics have been most severely criticised, and it has been maintained in antiquity as well as in modern times that Herodotus, while a credible witness concerning things that had come

under his own eyes, was a mere retailer of idle gossip concerning the eastern nations, and that he enormously exaggerated the extent of his travels. The discoveries of the last few years in Egyptian and Asiatic history, it is alleged, prove his incompetence, if not his dishonesty. It is well to remember, however, that scientific exactness is a thing of very slow growth, and that one of the lessons it enforces is tolerance of even crude gropings towards historical precision. History, as Herodotus uses the word, means research, and he says himself (vii. 152) that he is bound to relate what is said, though he is not bound to believe everything, and that this remark may apply to the whole history. With this in mind, one will be prepared to find a great deal recorded that fell from idle and irresponsible lips. It is all narrated, however, in a charming style. This simplicity, humor, and pathos lend an irresistible charm to his history or romance, as the reader may decide to call it.

As has been said, his aim was to write an account of the great war between the Greeks and the barbarians. To do this he went to work to describe the foreign nations that took part in it. The history of Lydia is of importance with regard to the beginning of the struggle and from its connection with the rise of the Persian power. Babylonia or Assyria, Egypt and Scythia were all, in their way, divisions of the general subject; and, inasmuch as he had seen these regions, he introduced much matter that threw light on the general condition of the countries under discussion. The part that describes the war has been less criticised. Like all the rest, it is narrated with extreme simplicity. The rest of the section from which a quotation was just made (vii. 152) will illustrate this:

“Now whether Xerxes sent a herald to Argos with such a message, and whether ambassadors of the Argives, having gone up to Susa, asked Artaxerxes about the alliance, I cannot affirm with certainty; nor do I declare any other opinion on the subject than what the Argives themselves say; but this much I know, that if all men were to bring together their own faults into one place, for the purpose of making an exchange with their neighbors, when they had looked closely into their neighbors' faults, they would all gladly take back what they brought with them. Thus the conduct of the Argives was not the most base . . . ; for even this is reported, that the Argives were the people who invited the Persian to invade Greece, because their war with the Lacedæmonians was going on badly, wishing that anything might happen to them rather than continue in their present troubles. This is enough about the Argives.”

This conversational turn is extremely common; he continually ends his statements with some such phrase, “so they say,” “such is the



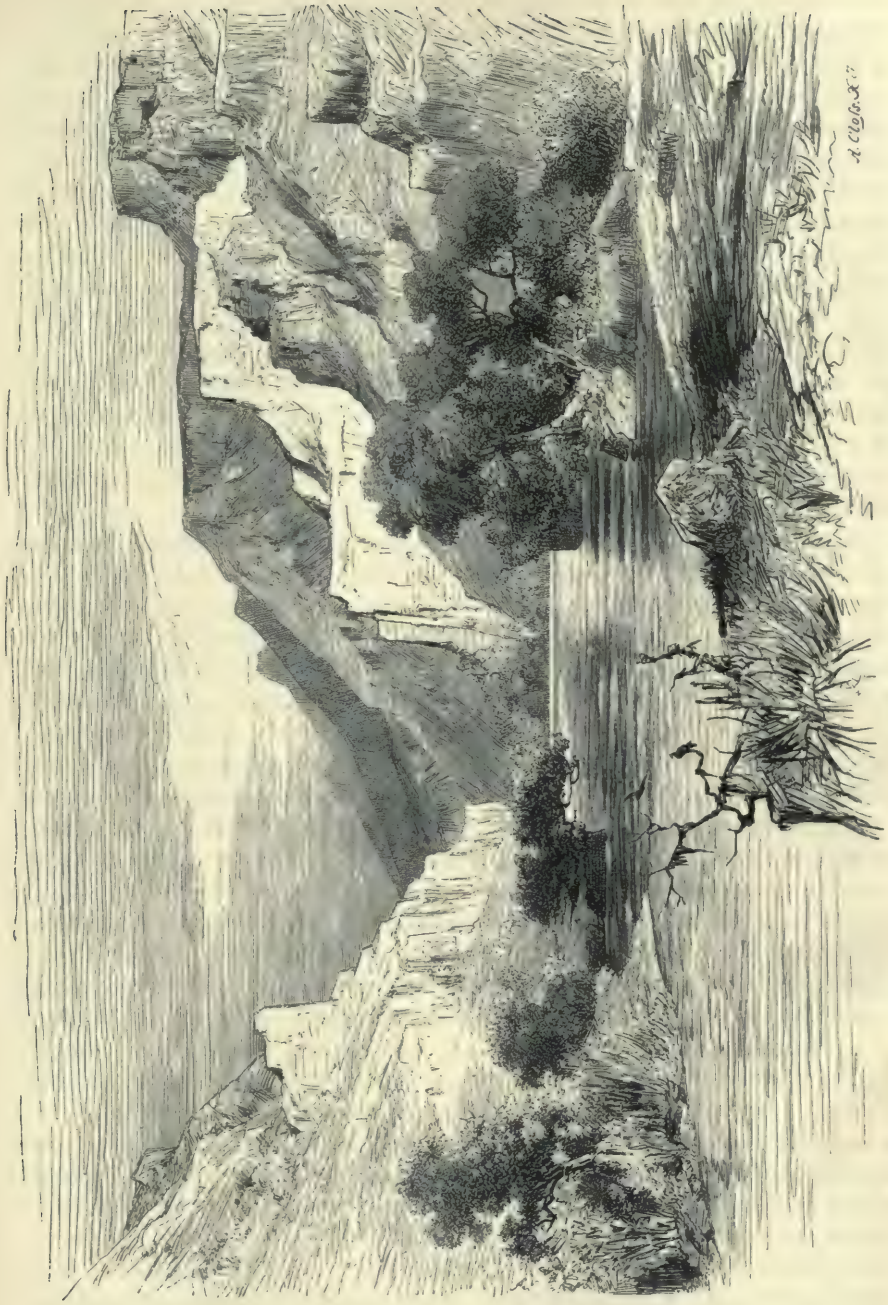
account they give," etc., assertions that give the history an air of amusing gossip. Yet, this can not remain a final judgment. He admired the Athenians, but he is able to mention their faults; he detested the Persians, but he does justice to their bravery and honesty. Certainly this fair-mindedness is not too common at any period. He makes it very plain in what respects Greece is inferior to other lands, and shows remarkable generosity to the barbarians. This quality certainly outweighs extravagant credulity about omens, dreams, and prodigies. His notion of Nemesis, too, is perhaps in itself as defensible as the modern habit of writing Greek history with the occult purpose of assaulting or defending democracy. Even when modern science shall have destroyed his claims as an authority regarding Oriental matters, enough will remain that was inspired by an effort to tell his story, to illustrate a remote epoch. We must always, too, avoid the temptation of confounding the general credulity of a period and the absence of scientific method with personal dishonesty. When Herodotus (vii. 129), speaking of Thessaly, says that in old times there was a lake, but that the mountains were cast down by an earthquake and the waters thus set free, he adds that the Thessalians affirm that Poseidon made the pass through which the Peneus flows.

"This story is probable," he goes on, "for whoever thinks that Poseidon shakes the earth, and that rents produced by earthquakes are the work of this god, on seeing this would say that Poseidon formed it, for it seems clear to me that the separation of the mountains was the effect of an earthquake."

Here we are between the antiquity that explained every event as the direct result of divine action, and the modern spirit that explains things by natural causes, and statements like these, perhaps, illustrate more clearly current notions than personal characteristics.

Indeed, we may say that the fate of Herodotus well illustrates the difficulty of putting ourselves, with our very different notions of the functions of history, in the place of that chronicler, who apparently endeavored to compose a prose epic. At least, if this plan was not definitely formed by him, it seems very possible that he was influenced by that poetical ideal in drawing the picture that he made of the next great conflict between Greek and barbarian. Not only do we observe throughout the whole study of literature a constant relation between every form of expression and the current thought of the time, so that, to take the last fifty or sixty years alone, we may easily detect the picturesqueness of the Romantic revival in Thiers, the contemporary adoration of magnificent heroes in Carlyle's *Cromwell* and *Frederick*, and the new scientific impulse in Ranke and his followers, and something similar may explain the tendency, which is strong in





PASS OF THE PENEUS.

*H. C. G. G. X. 17*

Herodotus, to let anecdotes portray national feelings, with scarcely more care for their exactitude than Homer felt. It was enough for him to listen to the chatter of dragomen who doubtless recounted the ready gossip of men who were still almost in the condition of myth-makers, and what he heard he set down as in duty bound. Weighing evidence was as far from his thoughts as the application of chemical tests to their gold and silver coins. He transmitted to us the various accounts that reached him, with all their inaccuracies and inconsistencies, with an eye to the general impression that they should make rather than to satisfying the demands of modern scholars. It is not easy for us, trained as we are to admire Homer, to sympathize fully with its authority among the Greeks as a historical text-book. The poetical excellence and its prominence as the sole piece of testimony floated an enormous amount of miscellaneous statement the real value of which could not be conjectured, much less determined; and naturally enough its methods, which are those of all early races, conveyed enormous authority.

Doubtless both Homer and Herodotus would have conferred an inestimable benefit upon us moderns, if they could have foreseen the sort of questions which we should ask, but they would not have been Homer or Herodotus if they had done so. We must be contented with what we have left, bearing in mind that this early historian was animated by some such feeling as that which we see in Shakspeare's chronicle-plays, and that authenticity is a remote and late-growing thing. Certainly, the delight that Herodotus has given to generations of readers might well serve to outweigh the indignation of his critics over the fact that he lived when he did and was most distinctly a man of his time and of his country. Anger over his shortcomings as little suits us as modern science would have been natural for him.

It is possible to agree that the stories with which Herodotus fills a good part of his history are a mere accumulation of folk-lore which he picked up from irresponsible sources, and yet to be averse to calling him dishonest. The anecdote about Arion's preservation by a dolphin can not properly find a credible place in a natural or a literary history. The reports about Cræsus, Solon's visit, etc., bear unmistakable marks of being anecdotes rather than facts; yet their collection shows what a vast number of his contemporaries mistook for a satisfactory explanation of events the way in which history was told orally before it was ever written down, just as the absurd stories about animals that found many unsuspecting chroniclers and readers for many thousand years indicate from what it was that the study of animals grew. Pliny the elder reports many statements about beasts and snakes that have actually no foundation, but it was by collecting and correcting these



statements that zoölogy became a science. In the same way by amassing idle reports Herodotus laid the foundations of historical science. He did in prose for the past what the poets had long been doing with mythology and the legends of heroic times; exactly as the fate of Troy had depended on the mood of Achilles, this later war seemed satisfactorily explained by the rigmarole that Herodotus found told everywhere about him, and which he told again in his turn. The swift development of the Athenian intellect that followed the Persian wars left him hopelessly remote and old-fashioned, like the wooden war-ships of the present day. With the new light there appeared a great contempt for the historian, but after a brief eclipse his fame shone forth again, and he received the admiration that he deserved, until recent scholars once more assaulted him as an impostor.

This fault-finding began about 400 B.C. with a book written by Ctesias, a physician at the Persian court, who remained for seventeen years in that country. He appears to have expressed great contempt for the assertions of Herodotus, who had made but a brief stay in Persia, whereas he himself was familiar with the language, had access to the royal archives, and hence was able to correct his rival's errors. It has been maintained by some that Ctesias merely substituted misstatements of his own for those of Herodotus, but although direct testimony is unfortunately lacking, it seems more likely that his fuller opportunities could not have failed to have lent his book much greater authority. The loss of his book is consequently much to be lamented; the rare scraps that have reached us in no way enable us to determine his accuracy with anything like certainty. Ctesias furthermore wrote about the other Oriental monarchies, and in a separate book he described India, thus giving to the Greeks their earliest information about that country.

It should be said, however, that the information that Ctesias gave would not now pass muster with any one. Whatever his accuracy about Persian affairs, his report concerning East India would shatter the most venerable reputation, although his experience was that which has often repeated itself with the first travelers in new countries: thus, he saw the men with dogs' heads that Mandeville describes, who dwell in the mountains (possibly they are Buddhist adepts), the pigmies, who may have belonged to some early race, as well as the one-legged people; and the *Sciopodæ*, who used their large feet as sunshades,

"and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders,"

all of whom have acquired literary rather than scientific standing, probably by exercise of the habit, not unknown even to students of



science, of indiscriminate copying from one's predecessors, so that in reading Mandeville we have the ghosts of the lies of Ctesias, almost sanctified by the authority of Pliny, who quoted them and thereby made them a part of mediæval folk-lore—and from folk-lore, probably, they took their remote start. Yet while Ctesias fathered a mass of inexactness about the distant and almost fabulous Indians, what he had to say about things Persian carried more weight; and the report of Herodotus, in spite of the charm of his style, a most powerful support, was often doubted by the ancients.

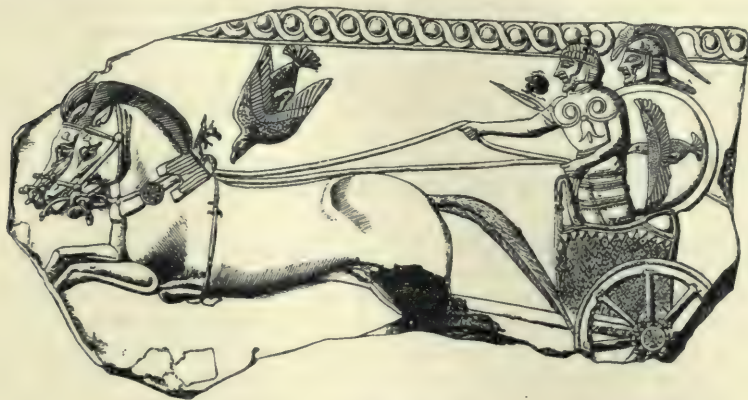
Although his attack on Herodotus damaged that historian's reputation, his own accounts were doubted by Aristotle and Plutarch. Another writer, the Pseudo-Plutarch, accused Herodotus of malignity and gross inaccuracy, but he merely injured his own fame and convicted himself of those faults. What probably was a sufficient cause for the subsequent neglect of Herodotus was the swift growth of the new spirit that found no charm in his simple narrative and greatly despised his ready credulity. No one is so sure to be disliked as the man whose faults are those that any given generation or period has just outgrown. Real antiquity can be appreciated at its proper worth and be admired without rancor, but belated antiquity has no mercy shown it. A generation that has thrown off the authority of its immediate predecessors cannot judge these with anything like fairness. We see examples of this in the feeling about Pope when modern poetry began to be written, and in the feeling of Pope's contemporaries for the writers of conceits. The days of the Ionic prose were gone when the rhetorical prose of Athens began to flourish.

Among the other historians of whom but little or nothing has survived, was Hellanicus of Mitylene, whose work is frequently mentioned by Greek writers. He appears to have written histories of the separate Greek states and of the establishment of the colonies. Fragments are left of the memoirs of Stesimbrotus and of sketches of travel and of persons by Ion of Chios, who is better known for his tragedies. In general, however, these literary ruins are mere dust.

#### HERODOTUS. BOOK VII.—CHAPTERS 100—105.

CH. 100.—Now when the numbering and marshalling of the host was ended, Xerxes conceived a wish to go himself throughout the forces, and with his own eyes behold everything. Accordingly he traversed the ranks seated in his chariot, and, going from nation to nation, made manifold inquiries, while his scribes wrote down the answers; till at last he had passed from end to end of the whole land, among both the horsemen and likewise the foot. This done, he exchanged his chariot for a Sidonian galley, and, seated beneath a golden awning, sailed along the prows of all his vessels (the vessels having now been hauled down and launched into the

sea), while he made inquiries again, as he had done when he reviewed the land-forces, and caused the answers to be recorded by his scribes. The captains took their ships to the distance of about four hundred feet from the shore, and there lay to, with their vessels in a single row, the prows



ASIATIC WARRIOR IN CHARIOT.

facing the land, and with the fighting-men upon the decks accoutred as if for war, while the king sailed along in the open space between the ships and the shore, and so reviewed the fleet.



BOAT WITH AWNING.

CH. 101.—Now after Xerxes had sailed down the whole line and was gone ashore, he sent for Demaratus the son of Ariston, who had accompanied him in his march upon Greece, and bespake him thus :

“ Demaratus, it is my pleasure at this time to ask thee certain things which



I wish to know. Thou art a Greek, and, as I hear from the other Greeks with whom I converse, no less than from thine own lips, thou art a native of a city which is not the meanest or the weakest in their land. Tell me, therefore, what thinkest thou? Will the Greeks lift a hand against us? Mine own judgment is that, even if all the Greeks and all the barbarians of the West were gathered together in one place, they would not be able to abide my onset, not being really of one mind. But I would fain know what thou thinkest hereon."

Thus Xerxes questioned; and the other replied in his turn,—“O king, is it thy will that I give thee a true answer, or dost thou wish for a pleasant one?”

Then the king bade him speak the plain truth, and promised that he would not on that account hold him in less favour than heretofore.

CH. 102.—So Demaratus, when he heard the promise, spake as follows:—

“O king! since thou biddest me at all risks speak the truth, and not say what will one day prove me to have lied to thee, thus I answer. Want has at all times been a fellow-dweller with us in our land, while Valor is an ally whom we have gained by dint of wisdom and strict laws. Her aid enables us to drive out want and escape thralldom. Brave are all the Greeks who dwell in any Dorian land, but what I am about to say does not concern all, but only the Lacedæmonians. First then, come what may, they will never accept thy terms, which would reduce Greece to slavery; and further, they are sure to join battle with thee, though all the rest of the Greeks should submit to thy will. As for their numbers, do not ask how many they are, that their resistance should be a possible thing; for if a thousand of them should take the field, they will meet thee in battle, and so will any number, be it less than this, or be it more.”

CH. 103.—When Xerxes heard this answer of Demaratus, he laughed and answered,—

“What wild words, Demaratus! A thousand men join battle with such an army as this! Come then, wilt thou—who wert once, as thou sayest, their king—engage to fight this very day with ten men? I trow not. And yet, if all thy fellow-citizens be indeed such as thou sayest they are, thou oughtest, as their king, by thine own country’s usages, to be ready to fight with twice the number. If then each one of them be a match for ten of my soldiers, I may well call upon thee to be a match for twenty. So wouldest thou assure the truth of what thou hast now said. If, however, you Greeks, who vaunt yourselves so much, are of a truth men like those whom I have seen about my court, as thyself, Demaratus, and the others with whom I am wont to converse,—if, I say, you are really men of this sort and size, how is the speech that thou hast uttered more than a mere empty boast? For, to go to the very verge of likelihood,—how could a thousand men, or ten thousand, or even fifty thousand, particularly if they were all alike free, and not under one lord,—how could such a force, I say, stand against an army like mine? Let them be five thousand, and we shall have more than a thousand men to each one of theirs. If, indeed, like our troops, they had a single master; their fear of him might make them courageous beyond their natural bent, or they might be urged by lashes against an enemy which far outnumbered them. But left to their own free choice, assuredly they will act differently. For mine own part, I believe that if the Greeks had to contend with the



Persians only, and the numbers were equal on both sides, the Greeks would find it hard to stand their ground. We too have among us such men as those of whom thou spakest—not many indeed, but still we possess a few. For instance, some of my body-guard would be willing to engage singly with three Greeks. But this thou didst not know; and therefore it was thou talkedst so foolishly.”

CH. 104.—Demaratus answered him,—

“I knew, O king! at the outset, that if I told thee the truth, my speech would displease thine ears. But as thou didst require me to answer thee with all possible truthfulness, I informed thee what the Spartans will do. And in this I speak not from any love that I bear them—for none knows better than thou what my love towards them is likely to be at the present time, when they have robbed me of my rank and my ancestral honours, and made me a homeless exile, whom thy father did receive, bestowing on me both shelter and sustenance. What likelihood is there that a man of understanding should be unthankful for kindness shown him, and not cherish it in his heart? For mine own self, I pretend not to cope with ten men, or with two,—nay, had I the choice, I would rather not fight even with one. But, if need appeared, or if there were any great cause urging me on, I would contend with right good will against one of those persons who boast themselves a match for any three Greeks. So likewise the Lacedæmonians, when they fight singly, are as good men as any in the world, and when they fight in a body, are the bravest of all. For though they be free men, they are not in all respects free; Law is the master whom they own; and this master they fear more than thy subjects fear thee. Whatever he commands, they do; and his commandment is always the same: it forbids them to flee in battle, whatever the number of their foes, and requires them to stand firm, and either to conquer or die. If in these words, O king! I seem to thee to speak foolishly, I am content from this time forward evermore to hold my peace. I had not now spoken unless compelled by thee. Certes, I pray that all may turn out according to thy wishes.”

CH. 105.—Such was the answer of Demaratus, and Xerxes was not angry with him at all, but only laughed, and sent him away with words of kindness.

#### HERODOTUS. THE BATTLE OF THERMOPYLÆ.—BOOK VII.

CHAPTER 207.—The Greek forces at Thermopylæ, when the Persian army drew near to the entrance of the pass, were seized with fear, and a council was held to consider about a retreat. It was the wish of the Peloponnesians generally that the army should fall back upon the Peloponnese, and there guard the Isthmus. But Leonidas, who saw with what indignation the Phocians and Locrians heard of this plan, gave his voice for remaining where they were, while they sent envoys to the several cities to ask for help, since they were too few to make a stand against an army like that of the Medes.

CH. 208.—While this debate was going on, Xerxes sent a mounted spy to observe the Greeks, and note how many they were and see what they were doing. He had heard, before he came out of Thessaly, that a few men were assembled at this place, and that at their head were certain Lacedæmonians, under



PASS OF THERMOPYLÆ.



Leonidas, a descendant of Hercules. The horseman rode up to the camp, and looked about him, but did not see the whole army; for such as were on the further side of the wall (which had been rebuilt and was now carefully guarded) it was not possible for him to behold; but he observed those on the outside, who were encamped in front of the rampart. It chanced that at this time the Lacedæmonians held the outer guard, and were seen by the spy, some of them engaged in gymnastic exercises, others combing their long hair. At this the spy greatly marvelled, but he counted their number, and when he had taken accurate note of everything, he rode back quietly; for no one pursued after him, or paid any heed to his visit. So he returned, and told Xerxes all that he had seen.

CH. 209.—Upon this, Xerxes, who had no means of surmising the truth—namely, that the Spartans were preparing to do or die manfully—but thought it laughable that they should be engaged in such employments, sent and called to his presence Demaratus the son of Ariston, who still remained with the army. When he appeared, Xerxes told him all that he had heard, and questioned him concerning the news, since he was anxious to understand the meaning of such behaviour on the part of the Spartans. Then Demaratus said—

“I spake to thee, O king, concerning these men long since, when we had but just begun our march upon Greece; thou, however, didst only laugh at my words, when I told thee of all this, which I saw would come to pass. Earnestly do I struggle at all times to speak truth to thee, sire; and now listen to it once more. These men have come to dispute the pass with us, and it is for this that they are now making ready. 'Tis their custom, when they are about to hazard their lives, to adorn their heads with care. Be assured, however, that if thou canst subdue the men who are here and the Lacedæmonians who remain in Sparta, there is no other nation in all the world which will venture to lift a hand in their defense. Thou hast now to deal with the first kingdom and town in Greece, and with the bravest men.”

Then Xerxes, to whom what Demaratus said seemed altogether to pass belief, asked further, “how it was possible for so small an army to contend with his?”

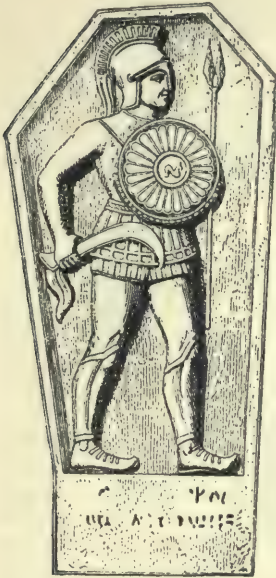
“O king!” Demaratus answered, “let me be treated as a liar, if matters fall not out as I say.”

CH. 210.—But Xerxes was not persuaded any the more. Four whole days he suffered to go by, expecting that the Greeks would run away. When, however, he found on the fifth that they were not gone, thinking that their firm stand was mere impudence and recklessness, he grew wroth, and sent against them the Medes and Cissians, with orders to take them alive and bring them into his presence. Then the Medes rushed forward and charged the Greeks, but fell in vast numbers. Others however took the places of the slain, and would not be beaten off, though they suffered terrible losses. In this way it became clear to all, and especially to the king, that though he had plenty of combatants, he had but very few warriors. The struggle, however, continued during the whole day.

CH. 211.—Then the Medes, having met so rough a reception, withdrew from the fight; and their place was taken by the band of Persians under Hydarnes, whom the king called his “immortals”: they, it was thought,



would soon finish the business. But when they joined battle with the Greeks, 'twas with no better success than the Median detachment — things



A PERSIAN WARRIOR.

went much as before — the two armies fighting in a narrow space, and the barbarians using shorter spears than the Greeks, and having no advantage from their numbers. The Lacedæmonians fought in a way worthy of note, and showed themselves far more skilful in fight than their adversaries, often turning their backs, and making as though they were all flying away, on which the barbarians would rush after them with much noise and shouting, when the Spartans at their approach would wheel round and face their pursuers, in this way destroying vast numbers of the enemy. Some Spartans likewise fell in these encounters, but only a very few. At last the Persians, finding that all their efforts to gain the pass availed nothing, and that whether they attacked by divisions or in any other way, it was to no purpose, withdrew to their own quarters.

CH. 212.—During these assaults, it is said that Xerxes, who was watching the battle, thrice leaped from the throne on which he sate, in terror for his army.

Next day the combat was renewed, but with no better success on the part of the barbarians. The Greeks were so few that the barbarians hoped to

find them disabled, by reason of their wounds, from offering any further resistance ; and so they once more attacked them. But the Greeks were drawn up in detachments according to their cities, and bore the brunt of the battle in turns,—all except the Phocians, who had been stationed on the mountain to guard the pathway. So when the Persians found no difference between that day and the preceding, they again retired to their quarters.

CH. 213.—Now, as the king was in a great strait, and knew not how he should deal with the emergency, Ephialtes, the son of Eurydæmus, a man of Malis, came to him and was admitted to a conference. Stirred by the hope of receiving a rich reward at the king's hands, he had come to tell him of the pathway which led across the mountain to Thermopylæ ; by which disclosure he brought destruction on the band of Greeks who had there withstood the barbarians.



PERSIAN SOLDIERS.

This Ephialtes afterward, from fear of the Lacedæmonians, fled into Thessaly; and during his exile, in an assembly of the Amphictyons held at Pylæ, a price was set upon his head by the Pylagoræ. When some time had gone by, he returned from exile, and went to Anticyra, where he was slain by Athênades, a native of Trachis. Athênades did not slay him for his treachery, but for another reason, which I shall mention in a later part of my history: yet still the Lacedæmonians honored him none the less. Thus then did Ephialtes perish a long time afterwards.

CH. 214.—Besides this there is another story told, which I do not at all believe—to wit, that Onêtas the son of Phanagoras, a native of Carystus, and Corydallus, a man of Anticyra, were the persons who spoke on this matter to the king, and took the Persians across the mountain. One may guess which story is true, from the fact that the deputies of the Greeks, the Pylagoræ, who must have had the best means of ascertaining the truth, did not offer the reward for the heads of Onêtas and Corydallus, but for that of Ephialtes of Trachis; and again from the flight of Ephialtes, which we know to have been on this account. Onêtas, I allow, although he was not a Malian, might have been acquainted with the path, if he had lived much in that part of the country; but as Ephialtes was the person who actually led the Persians round the mountain by the pathway, I leave his name on record as that of the man who did the deed.

CH. 215.—Great was the joy of Xerxes on this occasion; and as he approved highly of the enterprise which Ephialtes undertook to accomplish, he forthwith sent upon the errand Hydarnes, and the Persians under him. The troops left the camp about the time of the lighting of the lamps. The pathway along which they went was first discovered by the Malians of these parts, who soon afterward led the Thessalians by it to attack the Phocians, at the time when the Phocians fortified the pass with a wall, and so put themselves under covert from danger. And ever since, the path has always been put to an ill use by the Malians.

\* \* \* \* \*

CH. 217.—The Persians took this path, and, crossing the Asôpus, continued their march through the whole of the night, having the mountains of Cæta on their right hand, and on their left those of Trachis. At dawn of day they found themselves close to the summit. Now the hill was guarded, as I have already said, by a thousand Phocian men-at-arms, who were placed there to defend the pathway, and at the same time to secure their own country. They had been given the guard of the mountain path, while the other Greeks defended the pass below, because they had volunteered for the service, and had pledged themselves to Leonidas to maintain the post.

CH. 218.—The ascent of the Persians became known to the Phocians in the following manner:—

During all the time that they were making their way up, the Greeks remained unconscious of it, inasmuch as the whole mountain was covered with groves of oak; but it happened that the air was very still, and the leaves which the Persians stirred with their feet made, as it was likely they would, a loud rustling, whereupon the Phocians jumped up and flew to seize their arms. In a moment the barbarians came in sight, and perceiving men arm-



ing themselves, were greatly amazed; for they had fallen in with an enemy when they expected no opposition. Hydarnes, alarmed at the sight, and fearing lest the Phocians might be Lacedæmonians, inquired of Ephialtes to what nation these troops belonged. Ephialtes told him the exact truth, whereupon he arrayed his Persians for battle. The Phocians, galled by the showers of arrows to which they were exposed, and imagining themselves the special object of the Persian attack, fled hastily to the crest of the mountain, and there made ready to meet death; but while their mistake continued, the Persians, with Ephialtes and Hydarnes, not thinking it worth their while to delay on account of Phocians, passed on and descended the mountain with all possible speed.

CH. 219.—The Greeks at Thermopylæ received the first warning of the destruction which the dawn would bring on them from the seer Megistias, who read their fate in the victims as he was sacrificing. After this deserters came in, and brought the news that the Persians were marching round by the hills: it was still night when these men arrived. Last of all, the scouts came running down from the heights, and brought in the same accounts, when the day was just beginning to break. Then the Greeks held a council to consider what they should do, and here opinions were divided: some were strong against quitting their post, while others contended to the contrary. So when the council had broken up, part of the troops departed and went their ways homeward to their separate states; part, however, resolved to remain, and to stand by Leonidas to the last.

CH. 220.—It is said that Leonidas himself sent away the troops who departed, because he tendered their safety, but thought it unseemly that either he or his Spartans should quit the post which they had been especially sent to guard. For my own part, I am inclined to think that Leonidas gave the order, because he perceived the allies to be out of heart and unwilling to encounter the danger to which his own mind was made up. He therefore commanded them to retreat, but said that he himself could not draw back with honor; knowing that, if he stayed, glory awaited him, and that Sparta in that case would not lose her prosperity. For when the Spartans, at the very beginning of the war, sent to consult the oracle concerning it, the answer which they received from the Pythoness was, "that either Sparta must be overthrown by the barbarians, or one of her kings must perish." The prophecy was delivered in hexameter verse, and ran thus:—

"Oh! ye men who dwell in the streets of broad Lacedæmôn!  
 Either your glorious town shall be sacked by the children of Perseus,  
 Or, in exchange, must all through the whole Laconian country  
 Mourn for the loss of a king, descendant of great Héracles.  
 He cannot be withstood by the courage of bulls or of lions,  
 Strive as they may; he is mighty as Jove; there is naught that shall stay him,  
 Till he have got for his prey your king, or your glorious city."

The remembrance of this answer, I think, and the wish to secure the whole glory for the Spartans, caused Leonidas to send the allies away. This is more likely than that they quarreled with him, and took their departure in such unruly fashion.



CH. 221.—To me it seems no small argument in favour of this view, that the seer also who accompanied the army, Megistias, the Acarnanian,—said to have been of the blood of Melampus, and the same who was led by the appearance of the victims to warn the Greeks of the danger which threatened them,—received orders to retire (as it is certain he did) from Leonidas, that he might escape the coming destruction. Megistias, however, though bidden to depart, refused, and stayed with the army; but he had an only son present with the expedition, whom he now sent away.

CH. 222.—So the allies, when Leonidas ordered them to retire, obeyed him and forthwith departed. Only the Thespians and the Thebans remained with the Spartans; and of these the Thebans were kept back by Leonidas as hostages, very much against their will. The Thespians, on the contrary, stayed entirely of their own accord, refusing to retreat, and declaring that they would not forsake Leonidas and his followers. So they abode with the Spartans, and died with them. Their leader was Demophilus, the son of Diadromes.

CH. 223.—At sunrise Xerxes made libations, after which he waited until the time when the forum is wont to fill, and then began his advance. Ephialtes had instructed him thus, as the descent of the mountain is much quicker, and the distance much shorter, than the way round the hills, and the ascent. So the barbarians under Xerxes began to draw nigh; and the Greeks under Leonidas, as they now went forth determined to die, advanced much further than on previous days, until they reached the more open portion of the pass. Hitherto they had held their station within the wall, and from this had gone forth to fight at the point where the pass was the narrowest. Now they joined battle beyond the defile, and carried slaughter among the barbarians, who fell in heaps. Behind them the captains of the squadrons, armed with whips, urged their men forward with continual blows. Many were thrust into the sea, and there perished; a still greater number were trampled to death by their own soldiers; no one heeded the dying. For the Greeks, reckless of their own safety and desperate, since they knew that, as the mountain had been crossed, their destruction was nigh at hand, exerted themselves with the most furious valour against the barbarians.

CH. 224.—By this time the spears of the greater number were all shivered, and with their swords they hewed down the ranks of the Persians; and here, as they strove, Leonidas fell fighting bravely, together with many other famous Spartans, whose names I have taken care to learn on account of their great worthiness, as indeed I have those of all the three hundred. There fell too at the same time very many famous Persians: among them two sons of Darius, Abrocomes and Hyperanthes, his children by Phrataguné, the daughter of Artanes. Artanes was brother of King Darius, being a son of Hystaspes, the son of Arsames; and when he gave his daughter to the king he made him heir likewise of all his substance; for she was his only child.

CH. 225.—Thus two brothers of Xerxes here fought and fell. And now there arose a fierce struggle between the Persians and the Lacedæmonians over the body of Leonidas, in which the Greeks four times drove back the enemy, and at last by their great bravery succeeded in bearing off the body.

This combat was scarcely ended when the Persians with Ephialtes approached ; and the Greeks, informed that they drew nigh, made a change in the manner of their fighting. Drawing back into the narrowest part of the pass, and retreating even behind the cross wall, they posted themselves upon a hillock, where they stood all drawn up together in one close body, except only the Thebans. The hillock whereof I speak is at the entrance of the Straits, where the stone lion stands which was set up in honour of Leonidas. Here they defended themselves to the last, such as still had swords using them, and the others resisting with their hands and teeth; till the barbarians, who in part had pulled down the wall and attacked them in front, in part had gone round and now encircled them upon every side, overwhelmed and buried the remnant left beneath showers of missile weapons.

CH. 226.—Thus nobly did the whole body of Lacedæmonians and Thespians behave ; but nevertheless one man is said to have distinguished himself above all the rest, to wit, Diêneces the Spartan. A speech which he made before the Greeks engaged the Medes remains on record. One of the Trachinians told him, "Such was the number of the barbarians, that when they shot forth their arrows the sun would be darkened by their multitude." Diêneces, not at all frightened at these words, but making light of the Median numbers, answered, "Our Trachinian friend brings us excellent tidings. If the Medes darken the sun, we shall have our fight in the shade." Other sayings, too, of a like nature are reported to have been left on record by this same person.

CH. 227.—Next to him two brothers, Lacedæmonians, are reputed to have made themselves conspicuous : they were named Alpheus and Maro, and were the sons of Orsiphantus. There was also a Thespian who gained greater glory than any of his countrymen : he was a man called Dithyrambus, the son of Harmatidas.

CH. 228.—The slain were buried where they fell, and in their honour, nor less in honour of those who died before Leonidas sent the allies away, an inscription was set up, which said,—

"Here did four thousand men from Pelops' land  
Against three hundred myriads bravely stand."

This was in honour of all. Another was for the Spartans alone :

"Go, stranger, and to Lacedæmon tell  
That here, obeying her behests, we fell."

This was for the Lacedæmonians. The seer had the following :—

"The great Megistias' tomb you here may view,  
Whom slew the Medes, fresh from Spercheius' fords.  
Well the wise seer the coming death foreknew,  
Yet scorned he to forsake his Spartan lords."

These inscriptions, and the pillars likewise, were all set up by the Amphictyons, except that in honour of Megistias, which was inscribed to him (on account of their sworn friendship) by Simônides, the son of Leôprepes.

## CHAPTER II.—THUCYDIDES.

I.—The Vast Difference between Herodotus and Thucydides. The Life of Thucydides. His Conception of the Historian's Duty. His Modernness. His Language. II.—His Use of Speeches. His Self-control. III.—The Fame of his History. Its Presentation of Political Principles. IV.—The Sicilian Expedition.

### I.

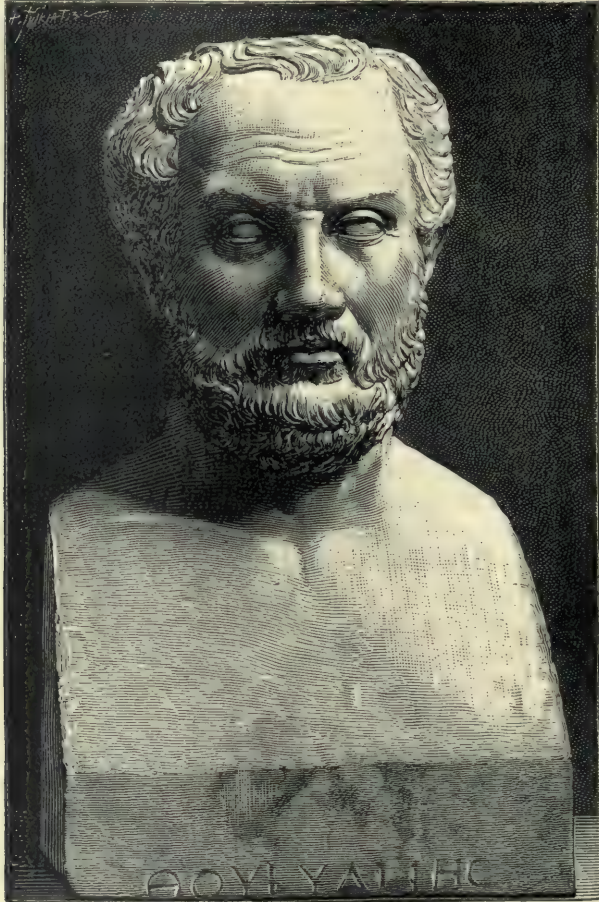
WHILE Herodotus, with his simplicity and credulity, thus belongs to a remote generation and has his roots in a period that had not broken with the mythical past, Thucydides stands as perhaps the most remarkable representative of the swiftly but thoroughly matured Athenian intellect. In fact, however, the two men, like Sophocles and Euripides, were very nearly contemporaries, Herodotus having been born about 484 B.C., and Thucydides probably not far from 471 B.C.; yet this coincidence in time in no way expresses an identity of beliefs. When we read the younger historian we find a man who has broken loose from the old-fashioned notions that had prevailed from immemorial time, and is eager to let his reason take the place of credulous imagination. The vastness of the change may be compared only with those that have taken place during the last half-century in some of the branches of science.

Of the life of Thucydides but very little is definitely known. The varying dates of his birth rest on meager authority; further than that he tells us himself that he suffered from the plague which ravaged Athens during the Peloponnesian war, that he held military command in the same conflict, and that he was banished in 424 B.C., for twenty years, direct information is lacking. The statement that he was assassinated in Thrace, where he owned gold-mines, completes the biographic details that have come down to us.

His mental attitude is, however, of far more importance, and with regard to this we have fortunately abundant means of judging. As has been indicated, the most striking thing about this is the complete rupture with the unscientific past; it was the aim of Thucydides to describe things as they were, not to record them as they seemed to men who were trained for many generations to detect divine inter-



ference throughout the course of events. The omnipresence of this view among the poets is very evident ; we continually observe Pindar seizing a myth with which to adorn his odes, or Euripides introducing a god to adorn the end of his plays, as we now see novelists overriding probability and the truth to provide a loving couple with a fortune and a happy marriage. The whole history of Herodotus is an exposi-



THUCYDIDES.

tion of the ways of the divine beings in their control of human affairs. Of all this there is no sign in Thucydides ; he looks at the mythical past as many years of study have taught the men of the present day to look at it, not with contempt, but with the desire to find the facts that were hidden beneath the fantastic shapes and inventions that hid the early days. Thus, at the very beginning of the history, he says :

"Judging from the evidence which I am able to trust after most careful inquiry, I should imagine that former ages were not great either in their wars or in anything else.

"The country which is now called Hellas was not regularly settled in ancient times. The people were migratory, and readily left their homes whenever they were overpowered by numbers. There was no commerce, and they could not safely hold intercourse with one another either by land or sea."

In this way he goes on, showing the uncivilized condition of the country in early times, and finally, on reaching the end of the sketch, he says:

"Such are the results of my inquiry into the early state of Hellas. They will not readily be believed upon a bare recital of all the proofs of them. Men do not discriminate, and are too ready to receive ancient traditions about their own as well as about other countries. . . . Yet, any one who upon the grounds which I have given arrives at some such conclusion as my own about these ancient times would not be far wrong. He must not be misled by the exaggerated fancies of the poets, or by the tales of chroniclers who seek to please the ear rather than to speak the truth. Their accounts can not be tested by him; and most of the facts in the lapse of ages have passed into the region of romance. At such a distance of time he must make up his mind to be satisfied with conclusions resting upon the clearest evidence which can be had. And, though men will always judge any war in which they are actually fighting to be the greatest at the time, but, after it is over, revert to their admiration of some other which has preceded, still the Peloponnesian, if estimated by the actual facts, will certainly prove to have been the greatest ever known."

It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of this change in the point of view of the historian, which substituted the direct examination of evidence for the accumulation of poetical fancies. It is really the triumph of the intellect over the imagination which here finds expression in these utterances of Thucydides. By a wonderful anticipation of the work of modern science, his vision of the early times as a period of crudity and barbarism is a direct contradiction of the fabulous stories of divine origin, of the worship of heroes, of the fanciful genealogies, which had long been celebrated in poetry, religious rites, and the fine arts. When we reflect how great has been the authority of these poetic conceptions over the imagination of subsequent generations, so that even now Greece calls up to our minds the vision of beautiful unrealities, which archæology is fast undoing, and when we consider the opposition that is felt to what is deemed irreverence towards the fascinating stories of the poets, and a still lurking feeling that archæology may work everywhere else, but that here is sacred ground; that the stone age of the Greeks was very different from the stone age of other races, that they were never real savages, but always



a somewhat exalted, half-inspired race,—when we consider all these things we can only give greater admiration to a people that could so swiftly develop and so speedily apply an intellectual test to the beliefs of centuries. No god-given superiority is greater than the power of using the intelligence; and this quality is what made the Greeks great, not the divine interference which they were fond of picturing.

Nothing in the history is more striking than the promptness with which Thucydides attained the position which we have only tardily reached, and it forms a most marked instance of the completeness as well as the rapidity of the intellectual development of the Greeks after the Persian war. That this rupture of the firm confidence in the stories of the poets could not happen without a diminution of the general trust in the religious myths is very obvious, and in this treatment of the past we see a distinct instance of the scepticism which soon pervaded Greek thought in many directions; here, however, we may examine its first effect in furnishing the beginning of an accurate method of historical research. Not all that he says has received absolute approval in later times, yet there are many sentences that have a distinctly modern sound, as when, for example, he makes mention of the early pirates.

"They were commanded," he says, "by powerful chiefs, who took this means of increasing their wealth and providing for their poorer followers. They would fall upon the unwallled and straggling towns, or rather villages, which they plundered, and maintained themselves by the plunder of them; for, as yet, such an occupation was held to be honourable and not disgraceful. This is proved by the practice of certain tribes on the mainland who, to the present day, glory in piratical exploits, and by the witness of the ancient poets, in whose verses the question is invariably asked of newly-arrived voyagers, whether they are pirates; which implies that neither those who are questioned disclaim, nor those who are interested in knowing censure the occupation. The land, too, was infested by robbers. . . . The fashion of wearing arms among these continental tribes is a relic of their old predatory habits. For in ancient times all Hellenes carried weapons because their homes were undefended and intercourse was unsafe; like the Barbarians, they went armed in their every-day life. And the continuance of the custom in certain parts of the country proves that it once prevailed everywhere."

Might one not be reading a book published only the day before yesterday? This application of the intelligence to facts and the observation of the value of custom as a proof of earlier habit have certainly a very modern sound, and are very unlike the smooth gossip of Herodotus. They are very satisfactory indications of the scientific spirit applying itself to the discussion of historical problems. Those, and they are many, who suffer from the fear that this spirit is destruc-



tive of poetry, will do well to remember that Thucydides was the contemporary of Sophocles and Euripides, that Shakspeare was the contemporary of Bacon, and Milton of Harvey. If they are right in their fears, and poetry exists only in conjunction with unquestioning credulity, its fate is certain and desirable. As it is, poetry has never yet been injured by an excess of real wisdom. They may also console themselves for the inevitable by recalling the fact that music has not been ruined by the application of scientific treatment.

Whatever may be the future fate of poetry, there can be no doubt that history has a higher value when subjected to scientific treatment; the capacity of listening to both sides, and the readiness to examine all testimony by the laws of evidence, is sure to produce better work than will blind confidence in mere report. Thucydides himself was by no means unconscious of the change that he was making in his treatment of history. Thus, in the same introductory pages from which quotations have been already made, he says :

"Of the events of the war I have not ventured to speak from any chance information, nor according to any notion of my own ; I have described nothing but what I either saw myself, or learned from others from whom I made the most careful and particular inquiry. The task was a laborious one, because eye-witnesses of the same occurrences gave different accounts of them, as they remembered or were interested in the actions of one side or the other. And very likely the strictly historical character of my narrative may be disappointing to the ear. But if he who desires to have before his eyes a true picture of the events which have happened, and of the like events which may be expected to happen hereafter in the order of human things, shall pronounce what I have written to be useful, then I shall be satisfied. My history is an everlasting procession, not a prize composition, which is heard and forgotten."

This explicit statement, with its half apology, makes it clear that Thucydides was aware of the novelty of the step he was taking, and of the criticism that was probably awaiting him. Herodotus supplied entertainment ; he would give exact information, and with the performance of this plan scientific history was begun, and Athens showed that it had reached maturity in prose as well as in poetry and art. The style of Thucydides, to be sure, is harsh and confused, as is natural ; for only practice can give grace and smoothness. The orators had this practice, and thus earlier acquired the facility which was made easier for them by the example of the dramatists, who put into the mouths of their characters long pleadings that reflected the Athenian love of argument and discussion. Thus Antiphon, Andocides and Lysias are not at all obscure. In Thucydides, however, we often find a cumbrous, awkward movement which is thus described and explained in the introduction to Jowett's translation : " He who considers that Thucydides

was a great genius writing in an ante-grammatical age, when logic was just beginning to be cultivated, who had thoughts far beyond his contemporaries, and who had great difficulty in the arrangement and expression of them, who is anxious but not always able to escape tautology, will not be surprised at his personifications, at his confusion of negatives and affirmatives, of consequents and antecedents, at his imperfect antitheses and involved parentheses, at his employment of the participle to express abstract ideas in the making, at his substitution of one construction for another, at his repetition of a word, or unmeaning alteration of it for the sake of variety, at his over-logical form, at his forgetfulness of the beginning of a sentence before he arrives at the end of it. The solecisms or barbarisms of which he is supposed to be guilty are the natural phenomena of a language in a time of transition. . . . They are also to be ascribed to a strong individuality, which subtilizes, which rationalizes, which concentrates, which crowds the use of words, which thinks more than it can express."

Many of the characteristics of his language are, moreover, such as belonged to the general form of the new prose which, as will be seen later, was now establishing itself in Athens; and some of its peculiarities were due, perhaps, to his long absence from that city, which deprived him of the opportunity of acquiring the rapidly developing perfection which it then assumed. He carried away with him a crude instrument and was compelled to model it in shape after his own devices, and possibly in his perpetual antitheses and harsh constructions gives us the outline which the Athenians enriched with many graceful forms. Few, however, put language to so severe a test as he; and throughout one of the main causes of his obscurity was his desire to avoid clouding his meaning by an excessive use of words. The compactness of the sentences makes them hard to understand, and it is not the degenerate moderns alone who have found him difficult: even the ancients complained of his abstruseness.

## II.

One of the striking things about his method is the custom of placing speeches in the mouths of different characters, in such a way that much of the story is set in a dramatic form before the reader. We find a similar device frequently employed by Homer, who faithfully reports the speeches at the councils of the heroes, instead of merely narrating what was done; and Herodotus continues the same practice. Its advantage in the way of vividness is very evident; and to those who were accustomed to listen rather than to read, its merits were most conspicuous. Thucydides inherited the plan from good sources, and





NIKE.  
*(From Temple of Nike, Memorial of Persian Wars.)*



so well-established a device had to be put into use, exactly as every old relic has to have a place provided for it by thrifty heirs. What he did was to give the reader not so much exactly what the characters said as what they might have said under the given conditions. He is careful, however, to explain his course of action, stating that it would have been very difficult for him to report the exact language of either what he had heard with his own ears, or what had been reported to him by credible witnesses, and that consequently he decided to put down what, all things considered, was most likely to be said, always adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of the words used.

"As to the speeches," to quote his own language, "which were made either before or during the war, it was hard for me, and for others who reported them to me, to recollect the exact words. I have therefore put into the mouth of each speaker the sentiments proper to the occasion, expressed as I thought he would be likely to express them, while at the same time I endeavoured, as nearly as I could, to give the general purport of what was actually said."

Undoubtedly then he treated the inherited custom with new exactitude.

We shall see later convincing proof of the general accuracy of his statement about the speeches, and the whole book stands as a justification of his boast that he had written an everlasting composition. The momentousness of the war which he undertook to describe found a fit chronicler in Thucydides, and his seriousness is amply proved by the extracts given above. Quite as remarkable is his impartiality, his freedom from personal feeling. This quality shows itself in various ways: the manner in which he speaks of Cleon is a marked instance of his continual self-control; less than half a dozen times does he have occasion to characterize that notorious demagogue, and then his harshest condemnation is to call him violent, "the most violent of the citizens," who "at that time exercised by far the greatest influence over the people," and elsewhere he merely says that he was "a popular leader of the day who had the greatest influence over the multitude." In another place he says that Cleon hated peace, "because he fancied that in quiet times his rogueries would be more transparent and his slanders less credible." Contemporary judgment is not always so calm, as those who saw the plays of Aristophanes would have been willing to testify. Even more remarkable is his unflinching devotion to the duty of a historian to record events and not to treat the world to his views about them. If he does this faithfully, he is safe in leaving the facts to produce the desired result without aid from him, and if he fails to record accurately, no amount of enthusiasm will long im-

pose upon the world ; yet too often historians, like their brother-writers, the novelists, appeal to their readers by exaggeration and eloquence instead of their legitimate weapons, description and narration. We notice especially in Thucydides the absence of expression of moral judgments, yet in the pages of no other historian does the truth burn so vividly into the heart of the reader as in his, which are carefully kept free from praise or blame. Thus, when Plataea surrendered to the Lacedæmonians, its inhabitants were put to death by their conquerors. Thucydides, following his usual fashion, lets them plead for mercy ; and these are some of the words that he places in their mouths :

“ Yet once more for the sake of those gods in whose name we made a league of old, and for our services to the cause of Hellas, relent and change your minds, if the Thebans have at all influenced you : in return for the wicked request which they make of you, ask of them the righteous boon that you should not slay us to your own dishonour. Do not bring upon yourselves an evil name merely to gratify others. For, although you may quickly take our lives, you will not so easily obliterate the memory of the deed. We are not enemies whom you might rightly punish, but friends who were compelled to go to war with you ; and therefore piety demands that you should spare our lives. Before you pass judgment, consider that we surrendered ourselves, and stretched out our hands to you ; the custom of Hellas does not allow the suppliant to be put to death. Remember, too, that we have ever been your benefactors. Cast your eyes upon the sepulchres of your fathers slain by the Persians and buried in our land, whom we have honoured by a yearly public offering of garments, and other customary gifts. We were their friends, and we gave them the first-fruits in their season of that friendly land in which they rest ; we were their allies too, who in times past had fought at their side ; and if you now pass an unjust sentence, will not your conduct strangely contrast with ours ? Reflect : when Pausanias buried them here, he thought that he was laying them among friends and in friendly earth. But if you put us to death, and make Plataea one with Thebes, are you not robbing your fathers and kindred of the honour which they enjoy, and leaving them in a hostile land inhabited by their murderers ? Nay, more, you enslave the land in which the Hellenes won their liberty ; you bring desolation upon the temples in which they prayed when they conquered the Persians ; and you take away the sacrifices which our fathers instituted from the city which ordained and established them.

These things, O Lacedæmonians, would not be for your honor. They would be an offense against the common feeling of Hellas and against your ancestors. You should be ashamed to put us to death, who are your benefactors and have never done you any wrong, in order that you may gratify the enmity of another. Spare us, and let your heart be softened toward us ; be wise and have mercy upon us, considering not only how terrible will be our fate, but who the sufferers are ; think, too, of the uncertainty of fortune, which may strike any one, however innocent. We implore you, as is becoming and natural in our hour of need, by the gods whom the Hellenes worship at common altars, to listen to our prayers. We appeal to the oaths



which our fathers swore, and entreat you not to forget them. We kneel at your fathers' tombs," etc.

Do these passionate appeals, these solemn invocations, need any exposition on the part of Thucydides to show us how wicked he thought treachery to be, how repulsive cold-blooded slaughter? Then he goes on to let the Thebans point out instances of similar ill-treatment of their prisoners by the Plataeans:

"Now we do not so much complain of the fate of those whom you slew in battle—for they suffered by a kind of law—but there were others who stretched out their hands to you; and although you gave them quarter, and then promised to us that you would spare them, in utter defiance of law you took their lives—was not that a cruel act?"



HONORING THE TOMBS OF THE HEROIC DEAD.

When he says this, there is no room for impertinent judgment; the story is told, and he has only to record that they took out each man separately, asked him if he had done any service to the Lacedæmonians and their allies in the war.

"When he said no, they took him away and slew him; no one was spared. They put to death not less than two hundred Plataeans, as well as twenty-five Athenians who had shared with them in the siege; and made slaves of the women."

A similar absence of praise or blame marks the whole book; we see, we are not told to admire, the bravery and military skill of Bras-



idas, the Spartan commander ; the pernicious course of Alcibiades is set before us without superfluous comment, and in the account, given below, of the Sicilian expedition, we behold the Athenian general Nicias letting everything go amiss by his dilatoriness and incompetence, without having the obvious lessons pointed out by the writer. In other words, he thoroughly respects his readers ; he does not find it necessary to tell them what they ought to think, but he rather exercises the reasonable flattery of supposing that they will be able to draw right conclusions from the facts if these are properly set before them.

With regard to Antiphon, the head of a dangerous revolution, he observes his usual reticence, or indeed something more than his usual reticence, and the question of the guilt of that leader remains undetermined. A more striking instance of his reserve is in his avoidance of partisanship with regard to the great conflict between Athens and Sparta, between what we may call the new and the old spirit of Greece, between the disposition to form a union and the aversion to any abandonment of the principle of separate municipal independence. What Thucydides felt in the matter is known ; but he tells the story without adjudging praise or blame, showing the merits as well as the defects of both sides with unequalled impartiality. This is his claim to the admiration of all his readers : he told his story, we are free to form our opinions as we please. There are, at least, the facts with which our opinions must finally conform.

The matter of the immortal book of Thucydides belongs rather to Greek history than to the study of literature, for it is a thorough chronicle of warlike events narrated in chronological order, year by year, and presenting a most vivid picture of that miserable war. Certain chapters burn themselves strongly on the memory, as, for example, those describing the plague that devastated Athens in the second year of the war. The wretched citizens were closely confined within the walls, and the pest had full sway among a populace wholly ignorant of sanitary principles. Thucydides himself was attacked by it, and he was also an eye-witness of all its horrors.

“ At the very beginning of the second summer the Peloponnesians and their allies, with two-thirds of their forces, as on the first occasion, invaded Attica, under the command of Archidamus, the son of Zeuxidamas, king of the Lacedæmonians ; and after encamping, they laid waste the country. When they had not yet been many days in Attica, the plague first began to show itself among the Athenians, though it was said to have previously smitten many places, about Lemnos and elsewhere. Such a pestilence, however, and loss of life as this were nowhere remembered to have happened. For neither were physicians of any avail at first, treating it, as they did, in ignorance of its nature — nay, they themselves died most of all, inasmuch as

they most visited the sick — nor any other art of man. And as to the supplications that they offered in their temples or the divinations, and similar means that they had recourse to, they were all unavailing ; and at last they ceased from them, being overcome by the weight of the calamity."

\* \* \* \* \*

"The disease then, to pass over many peculiar traits, as it differed in different cases, was in general such as I have described. And none of the usual diseases prevailed at the same time ; or if they did appear, they turned into this. And of those who were attacked by the plague, some died in neglect, others encompassed by every attention. And there was no settled remedy which brought relief, for what was good for one wrought harm to another. And no constitution, whether strong or weak, was secure against it, but it attacked all alike, even those who were most careful about their diet. But the most terrible part of the whole misery was the despair that seized every one who felt himself sickening—for by yielding to this despair they gave way without resistance to the disease—and the fact that they carried the contagion from one to another and so died like sheep. This caused the greatest mortality among them, for if from fear they were averse to visiting one another, they perished from being left untended, and many houses were emptied for want of some one to wait on the sick ; and if they did visit them, they came to their death, and especially such as were reputed to be kind, for shame made them tireless in visiting the houses of their friends, since even the members of the family were at last worn of mourning for the dying, and were overwhelmed by their excessive misery. Those who had recovered from the plague showed still more pity for the sick and dying, both because they knew from their own experience what they felt, and because they no longer felt any fear, for the disease never attacked them twice, so as to prove fatal. Such persons were congratulated by others, and in the excess of their joy, they nourished a vain hope for the future that they were now secure against every form of disease."

Even more interesting is the account of the recklessness that the plague produced :

"Things which before men did secretly, not daring to give full rein to their lusts, they now did freely, seeing the swift change in the case of those who were rich and died suddenly, and of the poor who succeeded to their wealth. So they determined upon swift enjoyment and immediate gratification, regarding life and wealth as things of a day. As for exertion in behalf of honourable things, no one cared for it, in view of the uncertainty whether he might not be cut off before he attained it, but everything that was immediately pleasant or led to it in any way whatsoever, was held to be honourable and expedient. Fear of the gods or law of men there was none to restrain them : in the one case they thought it all the same whether they worshiped them or not, inasmuch as all perished alike, in the other none expected to live long enough to be tried and punished, but that a severe penalty hung over them and that they should have some enjoyment of life before it fell."

Then he goes on to mention an old saying, that a Dorian war should come, and a plague with it ; there was some uncertainty, however,



whether it was a plague or a famine—the words in Greek being very similar—that should accompany the war.

“Now,” Thucydides said, “the opinion prevailed that a plague had been mentioned, many adapting their recollections to their experience. But if at any time in the future there should be a Dorian war and a famine at the same time, in all probability they will quote the line to that effect.”

It is these touches of impassibility that give this historian his air of modernness and mark the enormous stride made in the few years that had elapsed since Herodotus wrote. This change, indeed, is obvious in every page as one notices the firm grasp that Thucydides had of his subject and his omission of all extraneous matter. Nothing can exceed his grim exclusion of all the decorative part of historical writing; it almost seems as if he felt that the facts of life were of too vast importance to be hidden beneath fine writing. This serious view of the solemnity of history was of influence in limiting his attention to the military events of the great war. He did his best, one might almost say, to write a log-book of the long contest, carefully omitting those general views regarding society which later times have learned to notice in proportion as they have recognized the fact that life is a unit, that war, peace, art, letters, religion, society, are but different, though interwoven, manifestations of the greater human life that can not be studied exclusively in any one of its numberless forms. Even now this is barely accepted as a theory and still less in practice, and it has required for its statement many centuries of experience, so that there is no cause for wonder that it should have escaped Thucydides. Moreover, the narrowness of Greek interests and the exclusiveness of political life which only seldom looked beyond the walls of a single city, blinded even the most intelligent to the wider view.

It is moreover obvious that in writing a chronicle of contemporary events the historian takes it for granted that those for whom he writes are perfectly familiar with all that we may call the atmosphere of the surrounding conditions. Any references that he might have made to the intellectual or artistic interests of the time in which he lived, however much they would have gratified our curiosity, which by education concerns itself mainly about the writings and works of art of the Greeks, would have blurred the distinctness of the picture which he undertook to draw of the political and military events. These alone formed his subject, to which he confined himself with strict care, with this single object in view, and the result is a justification of his dignified boast that he was preparing an everlasting possession. Like every really great book, it repels everything but the most exalted curiosity; inferior work always tempts our idle moments; only a high enthusiasm



can keep us alert for what is best, in literature or art, as in conduct. Hence, the history of Thucydides is in no way popular, but for those who study its powerful pages, full of compressed truth, it is full of the most valuable lessons.

In the speeches we find a full exposition of the political principles that inspired the war. Everything in Greece, it will be remembered, at least every public act, was the object of discussion on the part of the whole assembly of free citizens, and it was by presenting the various arguments and explanations of the leading men under the form of speeches that Thucydides made what he had to say most intelligible to his public, and employed the form that doubtless first suggested itself to his mind. For just as now the newspapers maintain a perpetual comment on public affairs and exercise an enormous influence on men's minds, so then it was oral discussion, argument in the form of speeches, that formed and expressed public opinion. It was not precisely what we should understand as oratory that distinguished these speeches, for that word conveys to our minds a vague notion of an artificial, conventional form of more or less imaginary entertainment, and these discussions had a direct practical value as the mechanism of politics. These speeches then are not fantastic oratorical utterances, they are rather full of the forcible and eloquent treatment of political questions.

Even if we have not the exact words of the various speakers, what is put in their mouths thus possesses great historical value, for in a contemporary history Thucydides must have kept very near the exact truth. Even if we imagine him to have discarded what would have seemed to him such over-precision as the observance of dialectic peculiarities, the dramatic vividness that he retained is most valuable. Thus the speech of Alcibiades, in the sixth book, can be only the statement of facts familiar to all the historian's fellow-citizens.

"Athenians, I have not only a better title than others to the command—a topic with which, attacked as I have been by Nicias, I am compelled to commence—but I also consider myself personally worthy of it; since the very qualities for which I am denounced not only reflect honour on myself and my ancestors, but are of positive advantage to my country. In proof of this latter assertion, I need only remind you that the Greeks, who had previously hoped that the resources of our capital had been pulled down by the war, were induced even to overrate them by the magnificent style in which I represented Athens at the Olympic festival, when I sent down seven chariots to the lists—more than any private citizen had ever entered—gaining a first, a second, and a fourth prize: nor did the style of my equipments disparage the lustre of my triumph. Public opinion honours trophies such as these: and the pageantry itself creates an impression of power. Again, the distinction with which, within the city, I have served the office of choregus, among other public functions, though it may naturally excite the envy of a

fellow-citizen, is, to the eye of a foreigner, eloquent of large resources. My wild extravagance, then, as you call it, is not devoid of use, when its votary serves the public as well as his personal interests at his own cost. And it certainly is not unfair that a man who is proud of his wealth and station should repudiate equality with the mass; society acts on this principle every day: the man of broken fortunes, for instance, finds none to share his calamity. On the contrary, just as people take no notice of us in our hour of adversity, must they, when their turn of misfortune comes, brook the disdain of prosperity; they can only expect others to make no difference toward them when they deal with them on that principle."

Certainly one has here, if not the words, at least the thoughts of the speaker, uttered with a vigour and air of reality that the actual scene could not have surpassed. Whatever may have been the characteristics of Greek eloquence, it had the advantage of being practical, and in some of the later passages of this speech we find the serious consideration of important questions. This is the way in which he urged the Athenians to the ill-fated Sicilian expedition:

"What excuse can we plead to our Sicilian allies for failing to succour them? We certainly ought to aid them, especially as we have actually sworn to do so, instead of contenting ourselves with the counterplea that they have never aided us. For, when we espoused their alliance, it was not with the view of their returning the favour by coming here to fight for us: we hoped they would keep our Sicilian foes constantly embroiled, and prevent their assailing us at home. Besides, it was by a policy of intervention that we, in common with all who ever won dominion, acquired our empire; it was by heartily assisting communities, whether Greek or barbarian, which from time to time invoked our aid. Indeed, if there were no dissensions to interfere in, and if distinctions of race were made in choosing whom to succour, the extension of our empire would be a very slow process; or, rather, we should run a risk of losing it altogether. For every state is on the watch not only to repel the aggression of a superior power, but to defeat, by anticipation,



ALCIBIADES.

(Bust in the Chiaramonti Museum in Rome.)



the possibility of such aggression. And it is out of the question for us to cut and carve at pleasure the area of our rule : we are compelled, by our position as an imperial city, to intrigue systematically for the subjection of one state, while we tighten our rein upon another : threatened as we are with the risk of foreign subjugation, should we halt in our career of aggrandizement. In your situation, you cannot regard political quietism from the same point of view as other communities, unless, at the same time, you choose to recast your national character and pursuits on the model of theirs."

Whether Alcibiades actually used these arguments is certainly an important question, but even if he did not, the fact that a contemporary could utter them in this form is also important. It may be uncertain which deserves the credit, the brilliant leader or the historian ; it is at least sure that it was possible for a man of this time to see the condition of things and to represent it in this form. Just as an intelligent statement about human nature is one that enforces its truth upon every one that hears it, so these vivid political controversies remind the modern reader quite as much of recent as of ancient history, for the ambitions of men, and the arguments by which they defend them, are the same at all times : the main difference lies in the quality of the words in which they disguise or express them. The firmness with which Thucydides sets the condition of things before those who study his immortal book justifies his method ; the speeches are full of lessons, they make clear the enthusiasm that called the history "the eternal manual of statesmen." His own essential quality is to be seen in the exclusion of everything that is trivial and commonplace. Yet the fashion that he set was one that helped to produce much inaccurate work in later times. Livy and Tacitus, as Sir G. C. Lewis said, regarded "a deliberation in a popular body, or a military harangue, as an opportunity for rhetorical display, and composed speeches in prose with as much freedom as a dramatist would in verse." Indeed, they often abandoned the texts that lay at hand for speeches of their own invention, which they much preferred. History has always suffered from being misplaced among the fine arts, instead of being treated as a science.

Later, the reader will find some examples of the eloquence that is reported by Thucydides—with what exactness can not now be definitely ascertained—but this is not all on which his fame rests. The strict impartiality of his chronicle, the dignified avoidance of partisanship, have won all praise. The chronological division of events lends a monotony, a lack of picturesqueness, to the style of the book, but its veracity overcomes this slight objection. The history consists of eight books, although this division was not made by Thucydides him-



self; the first is of the nature of a general introduction, in which the author expresses his opinion of the magnitude and importance of the war which he had undertaken to describe, and he tries to show by a brief recital of the traditions of antiquity and a fuller exposition of recent events how it was that the war broke out. For some time after the Trojan war, the importance of which he thought to have been naturally much exaggerated by the poets, the migrations of the Greek peoples went on; finally matters settled themselves, and the Greeks began to send out colonies. Meanwhile, as the colonies spread among the islands and in Asia Minor, the Persian Empire arose, and conquered these Greek neighbors. Greece itself was pitifully enfeebled by the power of the tyrants who held the various cities in subjection and prevented all common action; Sparta alone escaped this oppressive form of government. The way in which the mother-country aided the colonists when defeated, attracted the attention of the Persians and evoked the great wars, in which the Athenians were first victorious at Marathon. Ten years later Xerxes came with his huge host to destroy Greece. The Athenians defeated him by sea, and



THEMISTOCLES.

the Lacedæmonians by land, and the country was saved. For a short time afterward the confederacy held together, but then the Lacedæmonians and Athenians, the strongest members, one by land, the other by sea, quarreled and fought. A thirty years' truce, however, put an end to this state of things, until natural jealousies again aroused them, and they fell apart over the controversies of the Corin-

thians and Corcyreans concerning the city of Epidamnus : the Corcyreans found support in Athens, and the Corinthians, in revenge, persuaded Potidæa to revolt, and induced the Lacedæmonians to declare their belief that the peace was broken, and that war should begin. Then Thucydides explains how Athens had attained its leadership after the Persian wars, in part by the merits of Themistocles, in part by the treachery of Pausanias, whose stories are told at some length. Finally the Lacedæmonians sent an embassy to announce that they would abstain from war if the Athenians would leave the Greeks independent, and an assembly of the people was called, in which Pericles induces the Athenians to prefer war to such a concession. Thus the actual story of the war begins only with the second book. The account of the hostilities up to the time of the peace of Nicias occupies about half the space, while the rest is taken up with an account of the five years' truce, the Sicilian expedition, and the later occurrences to the battle of Cyzicus, in the twenty-first year of the war. His death prevented the completion of the whole story ; indeed, it is said that the eighth book was brought out by Xenophon ; the exact amount of his work is not to be determined.

### III.

This history early found, not popularity, but enthusiastic admiration from competent judges among the ancients. It was said that Thucydides imitated Æschylus, Pindar, Antiphon, Prodicus, Euripides, and Homer, a statement which shows conclusively what authors were most esteemed by the utterer of this lavish outburst of praise. Quintilian made an intelligent comparison between the fluent, easy, conversational grace of Herodotus and the brevity of Thucydides which sounds as if he were speaking in a deliberate assembly. Cicero called him a great historian, and said that he was weighty in words, rich in thoughts, but sometimes obscure from compression. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, however, expressed the opinion that has been echoed by countless students, when he said that the style of Thucydides was affected, hard, confused, childish, and puzzling. The laudation, it must be remembered, was the exception, for he was never popular. Not every one cares most for precious metals in nuggets. Yet those who admired him more than made up for the lack of general applause which a man who strives to be impartial never expects to receive. The history was said by the ancients to be like a tragedy, a comparison which shows what was regarded by them as the highest literary product, for it was the sequence of events that made the resemblance to the tragedy, quite as much as the execution of the book.



A certain similarity is to be found, it is true, in the form that Thucydides adopted, that of letting the speeches elucidate the actions, but just as now any picture, poem, or what not, is said to be like a piece of music, so then resemblance to a tragedy was the expression of the highest praise.

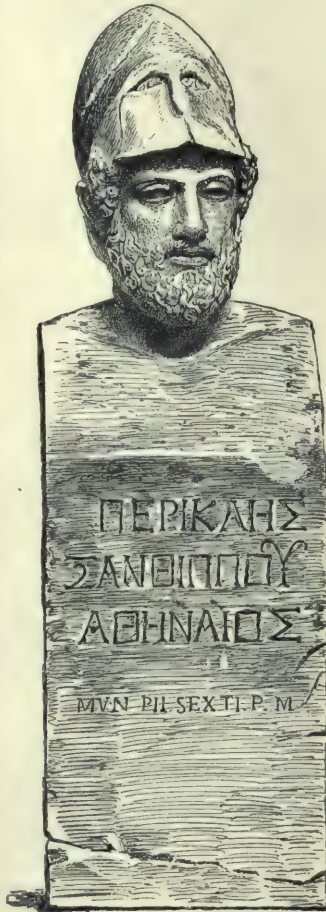
As a further example of the eloquence of the speeches that he introduces into his book, no better example can be found than the funeral speech uttered by, or invented for Pericles. It was spoken in honor of the Athenian citizens who had fallen in battle in the first year of the war, B.C. 431.

"Most of the previous speakers on these occasions have commended the statesman who made an oration a part of the funeral ceremony, considering its delivery a fitting tribute to the brave men who have fallen in battle, and are brought here for burial. In my opinion, however, it would have been well that the honours due to men who have proved their valour by their deeds in arms should be paid in deeds rather than in words; such, for instance, as the public celebration of this funeral, instead of stak-

erately approved by our forefathers, I must endeavor, in conforming, like my predecessors, to the ordinance, to meet the wishes and sentiments of each of you as nearly as I can.

"Our ancestors claim my earliest praise; for it is only just, and it is quite in harmony with the present occasion, that a tribute of honourable remem-

ing the reputation of many on one man, so as to make it depend on his speaking well or ill. It is a hard task to hit the mean; when there is a special difficulty in impressing the audience with a conviction of the truth of what is told them. An audience favorably disposed and familiar with the subject, naturally thinks the picture feebly drawn, compared with its own wishes and convictions; while persons unacquainted with the facts even suspect exaggeration, their jealousy being aroused, when they hear anything that transcends their own capacity. The fact is, eulogies of other men are tolerable only when the individuals addressed believe themselves able to achieve some of the feats attributed to others; the moment they are surpassed they begin to be jealous, and then they disbelieve. However, as this branch of the solemnity has been deliber-



PERICLES.  
(From the bust in the Louvre.)

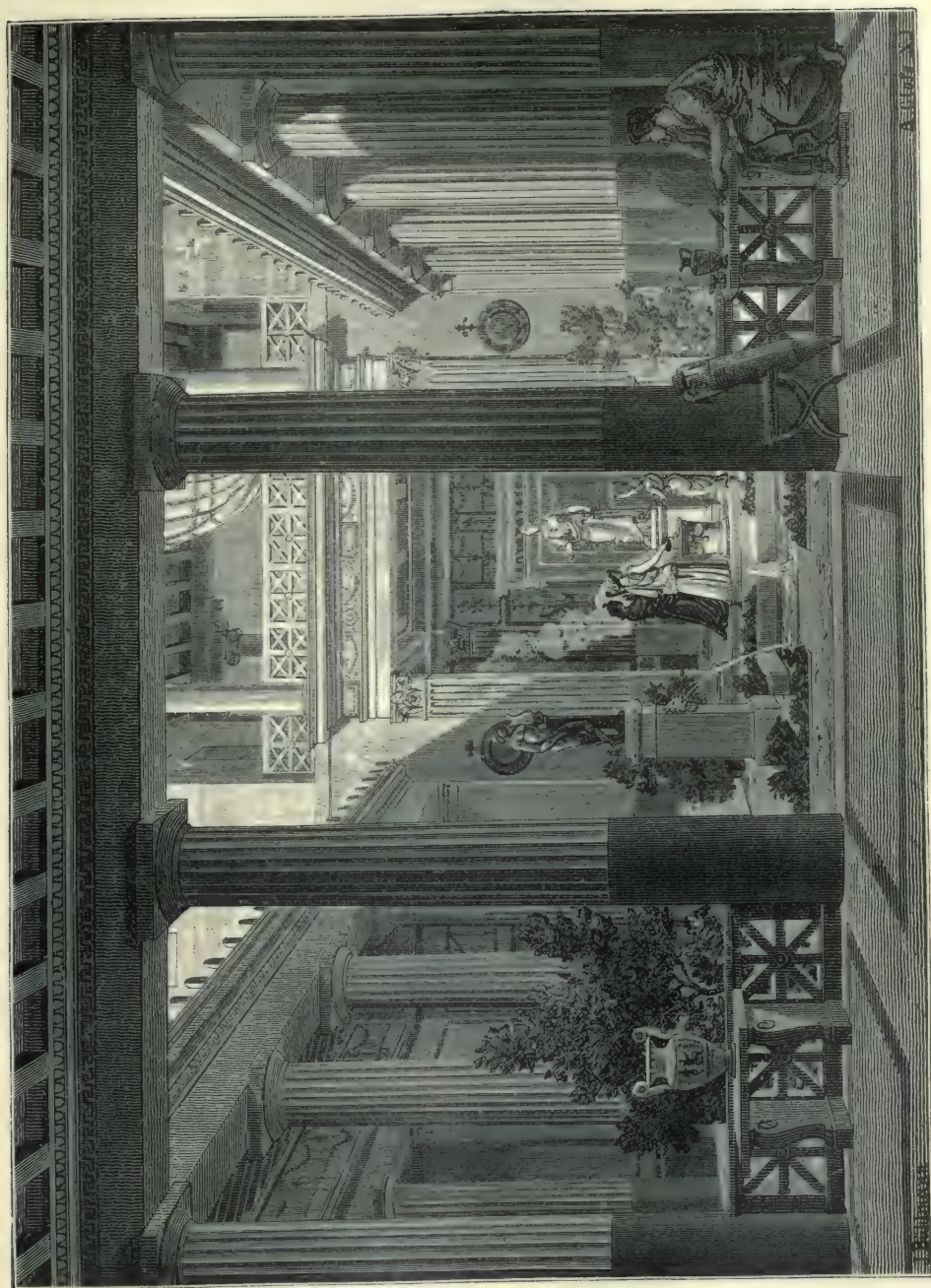


brance should be offered them, whose virtues maintained and handed down to our own days, through a long line of successors, the purity of their race and the integrity of their freedom. But, worthy of eulogy as they are, our fathers are still more so. Not content with maintaining the territory they inherited, they acquired and bequeathed to us of this generation our existing dominion, the fruit of many struggles. That dominion, however, has been largely aggrandized by our own efforts : by the efforts of the men now before you, still, for the most part, in the prime of life : and our country has been richly endowed with all the appliances of perfect independence, whether for war or peace. The military achievements of these heroes, whereby the several accessions of territory were won, and the threatened invasions, foreign or Greek, which our fathers or ourselves have bravely repulsed from our shores, I will not now detail, as I have no desire to be prolix before an audience so familiar with our history. I must, however, dwell for a moment on the training which gained us empire, on the form of government, the habits and the principles which raised that empire to greatness, before I proceed with my panegyric, believing the topic at once congenial to the occasion, and suited to the whole of my audience, whether Athenians or strangers.

"The constitution we enjoy is not copied from a foreign code : we are rather a pattern to, than imitators of, other states. It goes by the name of a democracy, because it is administered for the benefit of the many, not of the few. It is so constituted, that, if we look to the laws, we shall find all Athenians on a footing of perfect equality as to the decision of their private suits ; if we look to the popular estimate of political capacity, distinction in the public service will be found to depend on merit, weighed by a man's eminence in his own calling, not on caste. Nor again is poverty any exclusion, when a man, however humble his rank, is able to serve his country. A spirit of freedom regulates alike our public and our private life : we tolerate, without a particle of jealousy, varieties in each other's daily pursuits : we are not angry with our neighbour for following the bent of his humour ; nor do our faces wear censorious looks, harmless, perhaps, but odious. In private society, our politeness insures harmony : in public life, fear is our principal check on illegal acts : we obey the magistrates who are from time to time in authority, and the laws, especially those enacted to protect the oppressed, and that unwritten code whose sanction is a common sense of shame.

"Abundant recreation, too, to recruit our spirits, when jaded by the cares of business, is supplied by the very festivals which the Dorians ridicule, and the customary solemnities of sacrifice throughout the year, as well as by the splendour of our private establishments, our daily enjoyment of which scares melancholy away. Owing to the magnitude of our capital, the luxuries of every clime pour themselves into our hands, and it is our good fortune to enjoy the products of other realms as familiarly as the fruits of our own soil.

"Another remarkable contrast between ourselves and our rivals lies in the difference of our methods of training for war. The following are the salient points : We throw open our gates to all the world ; no alien acts exclude any of our foes from learning or seeing anything, the revelation of which may be of any service to them : for we do not trust so much to preconcerted stratagems as to that courage in action which springs from our own nature. Again, in education, our rivals set out in pursuit of manly qualities



AULA, OF ATHENIAN HOUSE.



by a laborious course of training commenced in childhood : yet we, though living at our ease, are perfectly ready to encounter dangers quite as great as theirs,—an assertion I can prove by facts ; when the Lacedæmonians invade our realm, it is never with mere detachments, but at the head of their collective force. In *our* case, when we march against their territory, it is with Athenian troops only, with whom, though struggling on a foreign soil against men who are fighting for their own hearths, we generally gain an easy victory. In fact, not one of our enemies has ever yet encountered our united force, because we have to provide for our navy as well as our army, and are constantly despatching our native troops on so many expeditions by land. If ever they engage a fraction of our troops, and get the better of a few of us, they pretend to have defeated us all : while, if repulsed, they say they have been defeated by all. And yet—to revert to what I was just now saying—if we, who live under a luxurious system instead of a toilsome training, if we, whose courage is the gift of nature, rather than the fruit of discipline, are, as I hope, just as ready to brave danger : a double advantage is gained ; we do not suffer from the anticipation of impending perils : and when we meet them, we do not yield in courage to the slaves of a life-long drill.

“On other grounds, too, I claim admiration for our country. Our fondness for art is free from extravagance, nor do our literary tastes make us effeminate ; wealth we use as an opportunity for action, not for ostentatious talk : poverty we think it no disgrace to avow, though we *do* think it a disgrace not to try to avoid it by industry. Among our countrymen political and social duties are combined in the same men : even our laboring classes have a competent knowledge of politics ; indeed, we are the only Greeks who regard a man who takes no interest in public affairs, not as one who only minds his own business, but as a man unfit for any business at all. If we, the people at large, can not originate measures of policy, we can, at any rate, judge of them when proposed : we do not think discussion a prejudice to action, but we do think it a prejudice not to be foretaught by discussion, before entering on the field of action. This leads me to mention another characteristic of ours—the combination of chivalrous daring with the most careful calculation of our plans : whereas, with the rest of the world, daring is but the offspring of ignorance, while reflection tends to hesitation. And surely the palm of magnanimity may well be awarded to those whom the liveliest appreciation of the hardships of war and the pleasures of peace fail to lure from the perilous path of honour to the charms of ease. Again, in point of beneficence and liberality, we act on principles different from those of the world at large ; we gain our friends not by receiving but by conferring benefits. Now benefactors are more constant in their friendship than those whom they oblige : they like to keep the sense of obligation alive by acting kindly to the recipients of their favors ; the friendship of the debtor, on the other hand, is clouded by the remembrance that his acknowledgment of the service will be the payment of a debt, not the bestowal of a favor. We, too, are the only people who, without a particle of distrust, aid the distressed, from no sordid calculations of advantage, but in all the confidence of genuine liberality.

“In one word, I declare that our capital at large is the school of Greece ; while, if we look to the citizens individually, I believe every man among us could prove himself personally qualified, without aid from others, to meet exigencies the most varied, with a versatility the most graceful. That this



is no mere rhetorical vaunt of the moment, but the real truth, our political power, the offspring of our national character and the tastes I have described, is itself a sufficient proof. Of all existing states, Athens alone eclipses her prestige when tested by trial : she alone inspires no mortification in the invading foe, when he thinks by whom he is repulsed : no self-reproach in the subject for submitting to a degrading rule. So far from our supremacy needing attestation, it is written in the clearest characters : it will command the admiration of future ages, as it already does of our own ; we want no Homer to sing our praises, nor any other poet whose verses may charm for the moment, while history will mar the conception he raises of our deeds. No ! we shall be admired for having forced every sea and every shore to yield access to our courage, and for the imperishable monuments of the evils heaped on foes and the blessings conferred on friends, which we have, by common effort, reared on every soil. Such, then, is the state for which these men, determined not to be robbed of their country, bravely died on the battlefield : and every one of their survivors will be ready, I am sure, to suffer in the same cause.

"I have dwelt at some length on our national advantages, partly from a wish to convince you that we have a higher stake in the contest than those who can not rival those advantages, partly to enforce, by the palpable evidence of facts, the justice of the panegyric it is my commission to deliver over our fallen patriots. That commission, indeed, is nearly fulfilled : for if our country has been the theme of my encomium, it is because she has been graced by the virtues of those heroes and others who assembled them ; nor are there many among the Greeks whose reputation can be shown to be so evenly balanced by their actions. But I may still appeal to the closing scene of their lives, as either offering the first indication, or giving the crowning proof, of their manly worth. In the former case, men may fairly be allowed to veil their defects beneath the courage they have shown in their country's cause : they cancel evil by good : their public services outweigh the mischief of their private life. Yet among these men there was not one whom the prospect of a prolonged enjoyment of wealth lured to play the coward : not one whom the hope whispered by poverty, the hope of some day exchanging penury for affluence, tempted to quail before the hour of peril. Considering vengeance on their foes more precious than such prospects, they willingly, in what they thought the noblest of causes, risked their lives to make sure of their revenge, holding their chances of future enjoyment in reserve. They left hope to provide for the uncertainty of success : but when engaged in action, face to face with danger, they scorned to trust aught but themselves : and, on the field of battle, they chose to fall in resisting the enemy rather than save their lives by surrender. If, indeed, they fled, it was only from disgrace to their name : far from flying from the battlefield, they bore the brunt of the conflict with their bodies, and, in a moment, at the very crisis of victory, were carried away from a scene, not of terror, but of glory.

"Such then were the principles of these men : principles worthy of their country. You, their surviving countrymen, may perhaps hope that your patriotism may be more compatible with personal safety, but you must disdain to harbor a spirit a whit less daring towards our enemies : looking not to the mere policy of so doing, with the eye of a rhetorician haranguing you, as familiar with the subject as himself, on the advantages to be reaped by a brave repulse of the foe : but looking to the practical side of the picture, the palpable proofs, daily revealed, of our political greatness — which may well

inspire you with a lover's enthusiasm for your country. And when you are impressed with its greatness, remember that it was gained by brave men, by men who were shrewd in counsel, and, in action, sensibly alive to honor : and who, if ever foiled in an attack, never thought of saving themselves, but paid their country the full tribute of their valor, nobly lavishing their lives as a joint-offering to her. Yes, they jointly offered their lives, and were repaid, individually, by that glory that can never die, and by the most honorable of tombs, not that wherein they lie, but that wherein their fame is treasured in everlasting honor, refreshed by every incident, either of action or debate, that stirs its remembrance. For the whole world is the tomb of illustrious men : it is not the mere monumental inscription in their native land that records their valor : no ! even in climes that knew them not, an unwritten memorial of them finds a home, not in monuments, but in the hearts of the brave. Emulate, then, their heroic deeds : and, believing happiness to depend on freedom, and freedom on valor, shrink not, to your own prejudice, from the perils of war : for it is not men of broken fortunes, men hopeless of prosperity, of whom we can so fairly expect a generous prodigality of life, as of those who still risk the change from wealth to poverty, and who have most at stake in the event of a reverse. And surely disaster, coupled with the stigma of cowardice, is far more grievous to a man of high spirit, than the sudden and painless death that surprises the soldier in the bloom of his strength and patriotic hope.

"For these reasons, I have to offer consolation rather than condolence to those among the parents of the dead, who are now present. They know that their lot from childhood has been chequered with calamity : and that those may be called fortunate, whose fate, whether in affliction, as theirs, or in death, as their relatives, has been most brilliant : and whose term of life has not been prolonged beyond the term of their happiness. Still, I feel how difficult it is to console you : for the successes of others — successes in which you, too, used to rejoice — will constantly remind you of those whom you have lost ; and grief is naturally felt not for blessings of which a man is robbed before he can appreciate them, but for those which he loses after long habituation to them. Those, however, among you, whose age allows them offspring, must comfort themselves with the hope of children yet to come. In private life they will lull their parents into forgetfulness of those who are no more, and our country will reap a twofold advantage : she will not suffer from depopulation, and she will be more secure : for it is impossible to expect fair and just legislation from men who do not share their neighbors' risks by having children as well as property at stake. Those, on the other hand, who are past their prime, must consider the longer period of their life during which they have been fortunate, as clear gain : the remainder they must expect, will be short : and they ought to cheer themselves with the fame of their heroic sons. For the love of honors is the only sentiment that is always young : and when men are past the age of heroic service, it is not gain, as cynics say, but rather respect, which pleases them.

"As for you, the children or brothers of the fallen, you will, I am sure, find the task of emulation difficult. Every one is ready to praise those who are no more : and, even with extraordinary merit, you will find it hard to be pronounced, I will not say equal, but only slightly inferior to them : for envy will attack a rival's fame, while life remains : and it is only when competition is barred by death that affection will applaud without alloy. Per-



haps, in deference to those among you who have been plunged into widowhood, I ought to say a word on woman's excellence. A brief recommendation will suffice : it is your glory not to overstep the modesty of nature, and to be in the least possible degree the subject of discussion, either for praise or blame, among men.

"Honors may be rendered both in words and acts. As to the former, the tribute has been paid in the address which I, like my predecessors, have delivered, according to the law, to the best of my ability : as to the latter, this public funeral has tendered to our patriots a portion of the honor due to them, and the rest their country will pay, by rearing their children at the public expense from this day till they are of age : thus presenting, in a spirit of the soundest policy, to our fallen countrymen and their survivors, an honorable reward for their courage in the battle-field. In a spirit of policy, I say : for the states that institute the highest prizes for valor have the bravest men for citizens. And now, having concluded the mourning rites due to your several relations, you may go home."

Of course the question arises here, as elsewhere, how closely Thucydides has preserved the actual words that the great orator uttered, to which no absolutely certain answer can be given, yet when we remember the importance and interest of this address, it seems likely that very much of it would live in the memory of those who heard it, and that this is of the nature of a true report. A few of the words of Pericles have come down to us, that attest the picturesque vividness of his language. Such, for example, is the sentence which Aristotle quotes in his work on Rhetoric from this very speech, that in the slain youth of Athens the year had lost its spring, but the sentence is not given by Thucydides. Of the other fragments there is this which Plutarch quotes from his encomium on those who fell at Samos, wherein he said that they had become immortal, like the gods : "for we do not see them themselves, but only, by the honors we pay them and by the benefits they do us, attribute to them immortality ; and the like attributes belong also to those that die in the service of their country." Plutarch also characterizes Pericles with a certain touch of sarcasm as filled with "lofty, and, as they call it, up-in-the-air sort of thought, whence he derived not merely, as was natural, elevation of purpose and dignity of language, raised far above the base and dishonest buffooneries of mob-eloquence, but, besides this, a composure of countenance, and a serenity and calmness in all his movements, which no occurrence while he was speaking could disturb, a sustained and even tone of voice, and various other advantages of a similar kind, which produced the greatest effect on his hearers."

While this oration which is placed in the mouth of Pericles presents the Athenian side, that of the Spartans is unfolded in the earlier speech of Archidamus, King of Sparta, which runs as follows :

"I have already, Lacedæmonians, been personally engaged in several wars,



and I know that those of my own age among you are also conversant with warfare, so that you are not likely to long for hostilities, like the mass of men, either through inexperience, or from a belief that they are in themselves desirable and safe.

You would find, too, that this war, the subject of our present deliberations, is not likely to be one of trifling moment, were any of you dispassionately to weigh the nature of the struggle. Our forces, indeed, when directed against Peloponnesian communities, especially those in our neighborhood, are similar to, and a match for theirs, and we can attack them rapidly in detail. But—a struggle with men who are rich in foreign dominion, who are thorough masters of the sea, and have long been admirably provided with all the appliances of war, with wealth, both national and private, with ships, with cavalry, with troops, heavy and light, in greater numbers than any which elsewhere exist in any *one* district of Greece: and who, besides all this, have a host of confederates who pay them tribute—how can it be politic rashly to engage in such a struggle, and in what can we trust when we attack them unprepared? Are we to trust in our fleet! No! we are inferior therein, and it will take time to practise and prepare a counter armament. Shall we rely, then, on our wealth? Scarcely! for in this point we are far more deficient still: we have no money in our treasury, nor do we readily contribute from our private resources.

“Perhaps, however, some of you may feel sanguine on the ground that we surpass them in our heavy infantry, and in the number of our troops, which would enable us to ravage their land by repeated incursions. But then there are considerable domains, besides Attica, which own their sway, and their command of the sea will enable them to import whatever they require. If, on the other hand, we were to try to seduce their confederates, we must find ships for their special protection, as they are for the most part islanders. What then will be the character of the war we shall be waging? Unless we can either sweep the seas with our fleet, or cut off the supplies that feed the Athenian marine, ours will on the whole be a losing game; and in such a case we can no longer with honour even negotiate for peace, especially should *we* appear to have provoked the strife. God forbid that we should encourage ourselves with the utterly delusive hope that the war will speedily be terminated if we devastate their land! I rather fear we shall even bequeath it to our children; so improbable is it that Athenian spirit will chain itself to the soil it tenants, or suffer Athenians, like men who have never been in arms, to quail before the terrors of war.

“Not, however, that I advise you tamely to allow them to injure our allies, and to refrain from exposing their intrigues. But I *do* advise you not as yet to draw the sword, but to send an embassy and to expostulate, without either too plainly menacing war, or allowing them to think we shall be blind to their ambition. In the interval I recommend you to complete our own preparations, by the acquisition of allies, both in Greece and abroad, in any quarter where we can gain either naval or pecuniary aid; for men who, like ourselves, are the intended victims of Athenian treachery, cannot be blamed for consulting their safety by foreign as well as Greek alliances. Let us, at the same time, develop to the utmost our internal resources: should they then show any inclination to listen to our embassies, all the better; if they refuse, after the lapse of two or three years, we shall be better prepared to attack them, should we resolve to do so. Perhaps, too, by that time, when they observe our armaments, and the warlike tone of our diplomacy, they

may be more disposed toward concession, while their territory is still inviolate, and they are able to enjoy, in their full integrity, those great national advantages whose fate depends on their deliberations. Indeed, the only light in which you should regard their domain is that of a hostage ; a hostage the more precious, the richer its cultivation. It is, therefore, your interest to spare it as long as possible, instead of rendering its proprietors, by reducing them to desperation, more than ever intractable to terms. If we take the opposite course ; if, hurried on by the complaints of our confederates, we ravage Attica without adequate supplies, beware that we are not adopting a course little to the honor of Peloponnese, and full of embarrassment. The grievances, indeed, whether of states or of individuals, it is possible to adjust ; but it is not easy for a whole confederacy to terminate hostilities on creditable terms, when its members have, each for his own interest, engaged in a war whose issue it is impossible to foresee.

“ Nor let it be supposed that delay on the part of a numerous confederacy to attack a single state is a mark of pusillanimity. Athens, like ourselves, has allies — allies as numerous as ours : they pay her tribute, and the contest hinges not so much on arms as on treasure, the sinews of war, especially when, as in the present case, an island is opposed to a maritime power. Let us first, then, fill our treasury, instead of being carried away by the eloquence of our allies ; let *us*, who will be mainly responsible for the results, whether fortunate or adverse, leisurely revolve beforehand the chances of success or defeat.

“ I must warn you, too, not to feel ashamed of that slow and deliberate circumspection which is their principal reproach against us ; for if you hastily take up arms, it will be all the later before you lay them down, because you will be entering on the conflict without due deliberation. The wisdom of our cautious policy reflects itself in our long career of freedom and glory ; and the very quality they ridicule in us is only another name for a wise moderation ; a quality which secures us a singular exemption from insolent elation in the hour of triumph, and, compared with others, from despondency in disaster ; from yielding to the fascinations of a gratified vanity, when people praise us and cheer us on to hazards which our sober judgment disapproves ; or from being piqued into compliance when a Corinthian speaker goads us with invective. Our love of order and discipline renders us brave soldiers and wise counsellors ; brave soldiers, because sensibility to shame is a powerful element in the love of order, and a chivalrous spirit in sensibility to shame ; wise counsellors, because we are trained with too little refinement to despise the laws, and with too severe a self-control to disobey them. Nor are we so overskilled in useless accomplishments as to depreciate our enemies' armaments in plausible speeches, without any corresponding energy in action. No ! our education teaches us to believe that, in point of tactics, our neighbors are nearly on a par with ourselves, and that the chances incident to war are far beyond the calculations of debate. We arm energetically against the foe on the presumption that his plans will be wisely laid ; for we have no right to build our hopes on the chance of his mistakes, but on the surer ground of our own foresight. We do not believe in any great natural superiority in one man over another : that man we hold the most valuable citizen who has been trained in the severest school.

“ Let us not, then, renounce the principles bequeathed by our fathers to us, and retained by us down to the present moment with uniform advantage ; let us not, in the brief space of an hour, pass a hurried resolution, when the



lives of many citizens, the fortunes of many families, the fate of many cities, and our own glory are involved; let us take time to consider, as our strength permits us to do more easily than other states. Despatch an embassy to treat on the affairs of Potidæa, and on the alleged wrongs of the allies, especially as Athens is willing to submit the subjects of complaint to arbitration; for public justice forbids your proceeding, previous to trial, against a party willing to accept such a decision, as against an avowed criminal. At the same time make every preparation for war. This will be the safest course you can adopt, and the most likely to intimidate your foes."

#### IV.

Undoubtedly, the most tragical part of the whole book is the account of the ill-fated Sicilian expedition, from which the following extracts are taken. The reader will notice the grim, dispassionate spirit of the historian, who is as impartial as nature itself. Thucydides, whose heart must have been wrung as he wrote down this merciless chronicle of error and misfortune, preserves his statue-like calm throughout, letting the facts speak for themselves, and suppressing, with a dignity that really rises to sublimity, all personal comment. He was a true representative of the greatest grandeur of Greece. His majestic spirit shines through the thick veil of obscurity that clouds his expression.

When Gylippus and the other Syracusan generals had, like Nicias, encouraged their troops, perceiving the Athenians to be manning their ships, they presently did the same. Nicias, overwhelmed by the situation, and seeing how great and how near the peril was (for the ships were on the very point of rowing out), feeling too, as men do on the eve of a great struggle, that all which he had done was nothing, and that he had not said half enough, again addressed the trierarchs, and calling each of them by his father's name, and his own name, and the name of his tribe, he entreated those who had made any reputation for themselves not to be false to it, and those whose ancestors were eminent not to tarnish their hereditary fame. He reminded them that they were the inhabitants of the freest country in the world, and how in Athens there was no interference with the daily life of any man. He spoke to them of their wives and children and their fathers' Gods, as men will at such a time; for then they do not care whether their common-place phrases seem to be out of date or not, but loudly reiterate the old appeals, believing that they may be of some service at the awful moment. When he thought that he had exhorted them, not enough, but as much as the scanty time allowed, he retired, and led the land-forces to the shore, extending the line as far as he could, so that they might be of the greatest use in encouraging the combatants on board ship. Demosthenes, Menander, and Euthydemus, who had gone on board the Athenian fleet to take the command, now quitted their own station, and proceeded straight to the closed mouth of the harbour, intending to force their way to the open sea where a passage was still left.

The Syracusans and their allies had already put out with nearly the same number of ships as before. A detachment of them guarded the entrance



of the harbour ; the remainder were disposed all around it in such a manner that they might fall on the Athenians from every side at once, and that their land-forces might at the same time be able to co-operate wherever the ships retreated to the shore. Sicanus and Agatharchus commanded the Syracusan fleet, each of them a wing ; Pythen and the Corinthians occupied the centre. When the Athenians approached the closed mouth of the harbour the violence of their onset overpowered the ships which were stationed there ; they then attempted to loosen the fastenings. Whereupon from all sides the Syracusans and their allies came bearing down upon them, and the conflict was no longer confined to the entrance, but extended throughout the harbour. No previous engagement had been so fierce and obstinate. Great was the eagerness with which the rowers on both sides rushed upon their enemies whenever the word of command was given ; and keen was the contest between the pilots as they manœuvred one against another. The marines too were full of anxiety that, when ship struck ship, the service on deck should not fall short of the rest ; every one in the place assigned to him was eager to be foremost among his fellows. Many vessels meeting—and never did so many fight in so small a space, for the two fleets together amounted to nearly two hundred—they were seldom able to strike in the regular manner, because they had no opportunity of first retiring or breaking the line ; they generally fouled one another as ship dashed against ship in the hurry of flight or pursuit. All the time that another vessel was bearing down, the men on deck poured showers of javelins and arrows and stones upon the enemy ; and when the two closed, the marines fought hand to hand, and endeavoured to board. In many places, owing to the want of room, they who had struck another found that they were struck themselves ; often two or even more vessels were unavoidably entangled about one, and the pilots had to make plans of attack and defence, not against one adversary only, but against several coming from different sides. The crash of so many ships dashing against one another took away the wits of the sailors, and made it impossible to hear the boatswains, whose voices in both fleets rose high, as they gave directions to the rowers, or cheered them on in the excitement of the struggle. On the Athenian side they were shouting to their men that they must force a passage and seize the opportunity now or never of returning in safety to their native land. To the Syracusans and their allies was represented the glory of preventing the escape of their enemies, and of a victory by which every man would exalt the honour of his own city. The commanders too, when they saw any ship backing water without necessity, would call the captain by his name, and ask, of the Athenians, whether they were retreating because they expected to be more at home upon the land of their bitterest foes than upon that sea which had been their own so long ; on the Syracusan side, whether, when they knew perfectly well that the Athenians were only eager to find some means of flight, they would themselves fly from the fugitives.

While the naval engagement hung in the balance the two armies on shore had great trial and conflict of soul. The Sicilian soldier was animated by the hope of increasing the glory which he had already won, while the invader was tormented by the fear that his fortunes might sink lower still. The last chance of the Athenians lay in their ships, and their anxiety was dreadful. The fortune of the battle varied ; and it was not possible that the spectators on the shore should all receive the same impression of it. Being quite close and having different points of view, they would some of them see their

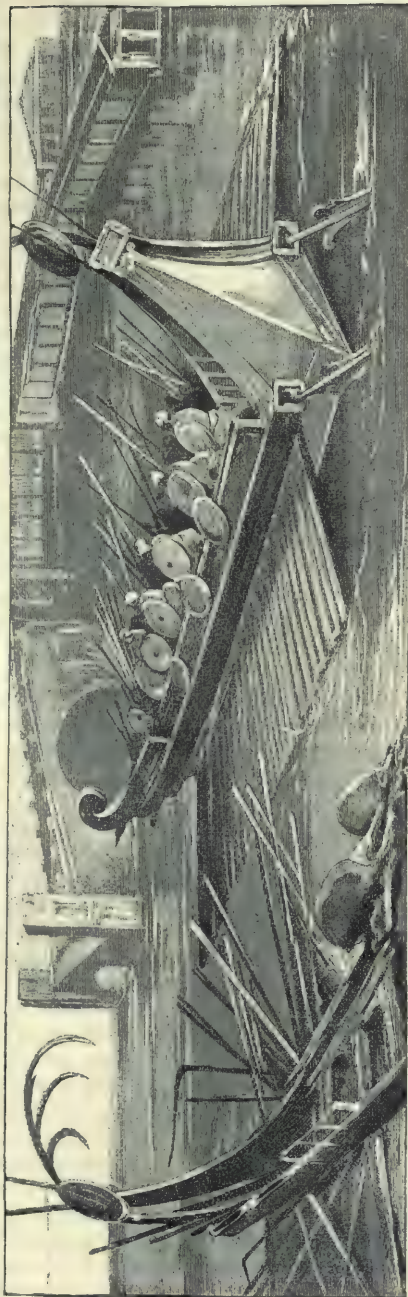
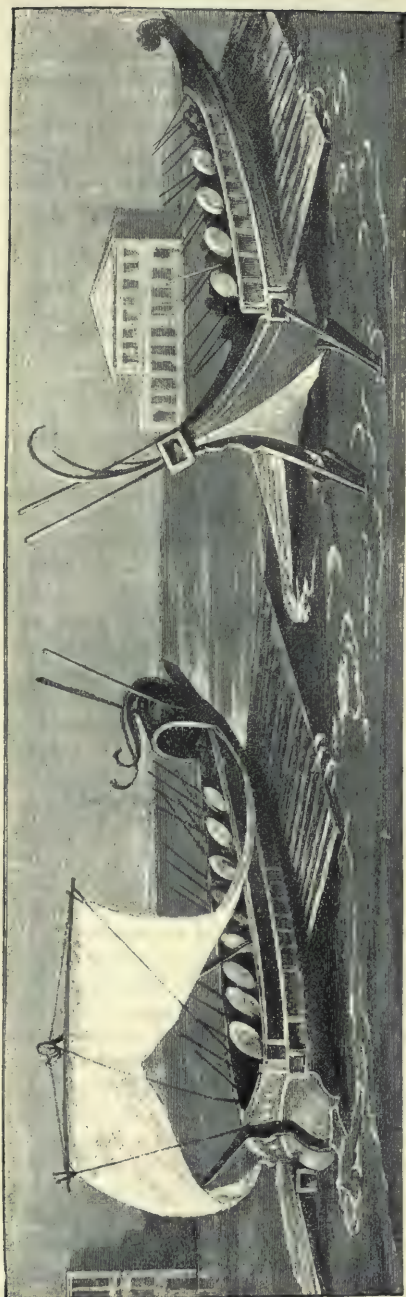
own ships victorious; their courage would then revive, and they would earnestly call upon the Gods not to take from them their hope of deliverance.

But others, who saw their ships worsted, cried and shrieked aloud, and were by the sight alone more utterly unnerved than the defeated combatants themselves. Others again, who had fixed their gaze on some part of the struggle which was undecided, were in a state of excitement still more terrible; they kept swaying their bodies to and fro in an agony of hope and fear as the stubborn conflict went on and on; for at every instant they were all but saved or all but lost. And while the strife hung in the balance you might hear in the Athenian army at once lamentation, shouting, cries of victory or defeat, and all the various sounds which are wrung from a great host in extremity of danger. Not less agonising were the feelings of those on board. At length the Syracusans and their allies, after a protracted struggle, put the Athenians to flight, and triumphantly bearing down upon them, and encouraging one another with loud cries and exhortations, drove them to land. Then that part of the navy which had not been taken in the deep water fell back in confusion to the shore, and the crews rushed out of the ships into the camp. And the land-forces, no longer now divided in feeling, but uttering one universal groan of intolerable anguish, ran, some of them to save the ships, others to defend what remained of the wall; but the greater number began to look to themselves and to their own safety. Never had there been a greater panic in an Athenian army than at that moment. They now suffered what they had done to others at Pylos. For at Pylos the Lacedæmonians, when they saw their ships destroyed, knew that their friends who had crossed over into the island of Sphacteria were lost with them. And so now the Athenians after the rout of their fleet, knew that they had no hope of saving themselves by land unless events took some extraordinary turn.

Thus, after a fierce battle and a great destruction of ships and men on both sides, the Syracusans and their allies gained the victory. They gathered up the wrecks and bodies of the dead, and sailing back to the city, erected a trophy. The Athenians, overwhelmed by their misery, never so much as thought of recovering their wrecks or of asking leave to collect their dead. Their intention was to retreat that very night. Demosthenes came to Nicias and proposed that they should once more man their remaining vessels and endeavour to force the passage at daybreak, saying that they had more ships fit for service than the enemy. For the Athenian fleet still numbered sixty, but the enemy had less than fifty. Nicias approved of his proposal, and they would have manned the ships, but the sailors refused to embark; for they were paralysed by their defeat, and had no longer any hope of succeeding. So the Athenians all made up their minds to escape by land.

Hermocrates the Syracusan suspected their intention, and dreading what might happen if their vast army, retreating by land and settling somewhere in Sicily, should choose to renew the war, he went to the authorities, and represented to them that they ought not to allow the Athenians to withdraw by night (mentioning his own suspicion of their intentions), but that all the Syracusans and their allies should march out before them, wall up the roads, and occupy the passes with a guard. They thought very much as he did, and wanted to carry out his plan, but doubted whether their men, who were too glad to repose after a great battle, and in time of festival—for there happened on that very day to be a sacrifice to Heracles—could be induced to obey. Most of them, in the exultation of victory, were drinking and





SEA-FIGHT.



keeping holiday, and at such a time how could they ever be expected to take up arms and go forth at the order of the generals? On these grounds the authorities decided that the thing was impossible. Whereupon Hermocrates himself, fearing lest the Athenians should gain a start and quietly pass the most difficult places in the night, contrived the following plan: when it was growing dark he sent certain of his own acquaintances, accompanied by a few horsemen, to the Athenian camp. They rode up within earshot, and pretending to be friends (there were known to be men in the city who gave information to Nicias of what went on) called to some of the soldiers, and bade them tell him not to withdraw his army during the night, for the Syracusans were guarding the roads; he should make preparation at leisure and retire by day. Having delivered their message they departed, and those who heard them informed the Athenian generals.

On receiving this message, which they supposed to be genuine, they remained during the night. And having once given up the intention of starting immediately, they decided to remain during the next day, that the soldiers might, as well as they could, put together their baggage in the most convenient form, and depart, taking with them the bare necessities of life, but nothing else.

Meanwhile the Syracusans and Gylippus, going forth before them with their land-forces, blocked the roads in the country by which the Athenians were likely to pass, guarded the fords of the rivers and streams, and posted themselves at the best points for receiving and stopping them. Their sailors rowed up to the beach and dragged away the Athenian ships. The Athenians themselves burnt a few of them, as they had intended, but the rest the Syracusans towed away, unmolested and at their leisure, from the places where they had severally run aground, and conveyed them to the city.

"On the third day after the sea-fight, when Nicias and Demosthenes thought that their preparations were complete, the army began to move. They were in a dreadful condition; not only was there the great fact that they had lost their whole fleet, and instead of their expected triumph had brought the utmost peril upon Athens as well as upon themselves, but also the sights which presented themselves as they quitted the camp were painful to every eye and mind. The dead were unburied, and when any one saw the body of a friend lying on the ground he was smitten with sorrow and dread, while the sick or wounded who still survived but had to be left, were even a greater trial to the living, and more to be pitied than those who were gone. Their prayers and lamentations drove their companions to distraction; they would beg that they might be taken with them, and call by name any friend or relation whom they saw passing; they would hang upon their departing comrades and follow as far as they could, and when their limbs and strength failed them and they dropped behind, many were the imprecations and cries which they uttered. So that the whole army was in tears, and such was their despair that they could hardly make up their minds to stir, although they were leaving an enemy's country, having suffered calamities too great for tears already, and dreading miseries yet greater in the unknown future. There was also a general feeling of shame and self-reproach,—indeed they seemed, not like an army, but like the fugitive population of a city captured after a siege; and of a great city too. For the whole multitude who were marching together numbered not less than forty thousand. Each of them took with him anything he could carry which was likely to be of use. Even the

heavy-armed and cavalry, contrary to their practice when under arms, conveyed about their persons their own food, some because they had no attendants, others because they could not trust them; for they had long been deserting, and most of them had gone off all at once. Nor was the food which they carried sufficient; for the supplies of the camp had failed. Their disgrace and the universality of the misery, although there might be some consolation in the very community of suffering, was nevertheless at that moment hard to bear, especially when they remembered from what pomp and splendour they had fallen into their present low estate. Never had an Hellenic army experienced such a reverse. They had come intending to enslave others, and they were going away in fear that they would be themselves enslaved. Instead of the prayers and hymns with which they had put to sea, they were now departing amid appeals to heaven of another sort. They were no longer sailors but landsmen, depending, not upon their fleet, but upon their infantry. Yet in face of the great danger which still threatened them all these things appeared endurable.

Nicias, seeing the army disheartened at their terrible fall, went along the ranks and encouraged and consoled them as well as he could. In his fervour he raised his voice as he passed from one to another and spoke louder and louder, desiring that the benefit of his words might reach as far as possible.

"Even now, Athenians and allies, we must hope: men have been delivered out of worse straits than these, and I would not have you judge yourselves too severely on account either of the reverses which you have sustained or of your present undeserved miseries. I too am as weak as any of you; for I am quite prostrated by my disease as you see. And although there was a time when I might have been thought equal to the best of you in the happiness of my private and public life, I am now in as great danger and as much at the mercy of fortune as the meanest. Yet my days have been passed in the performance of many a religious duty, and of many a just and blameless action. Therefore my hope of the future remains unshaken, and our calamities do not appal me as they might. Who knows that they may not be lightened? For our enemies have had their full share of success, and if our expedition provoked the jealousy of any god, by this time we have been punished enough. Others ere now have attacked their neighbours; they have done as men will do, and suffered what men can bear. We may therefore begin to hope that the gods will be more merciful to us; for we now invite their pity rather than their jealousy. And look at your own well-armed ranks; see how many brave soldiers you are, marching in solid array, and do not be dismayed; bear in mind that wherever you plant yourselves you are a city already, and that no city of Sicily will find it easy to resist your attack, or can dislodge you if you choose to settle. Provide for the safety and good order of your own march, and remember every one of you that on whatever spot a man is compelled to fight, there if he conquer he may find a home and a fortress.

"We must press forward day and night, for our supplies are but scanty. The Sicels through fear of the Syracusans still adhere to us, and if we can only reach any part of their territory we shall be among friends, and you may consider yourselves secure. We have sent to them, and they have been told to meet us and bring food. In a word, soldiers, let me tell you that you must be brave; there is no place near to which a coward can fly. And if you now escape your enemies, those of you who are not Athenians may see once more the home for which they long, while you Athenians will



again rear aloft the fallen greatness of Athens. For men, and not walls or ships in which are no men, constitute a state."



GREEK HOPLIT.

Thus exhorting his troops Nicias passed through the army, and wherever he saw gaps in the ranks or the men dropping out of line, he brought them back to their proper place. Demosthenes did the same for the troops under his command, and gave them similar exhortations. The army marched disposed in a hollow oblong: the division of Nicias leading, and that of Demosthenes following; the hoplites enclosed within their ranks the baggage-bearers and the rest of the army. When they arrived at the ford of the river Anapus they found a force of the Syracusans and of their allies drawn up to meet them; these they put to flight, and, getting command of the ford, proceeded on their march. The Syracusans continually harassed them, the cavalry riding alongside, and the light-armed troops hurling darts at them. On this day the Athenians proceeded about four-and-a-half miles and encamped at a hill. On the next day they started early, and, having advanced more than two miles, descended into a level plain, and encamped. The country was inhabited, and they were desirous of obtaining food from the houses, and also water

which they might carry with them, as there was little to be had for many miles in the country which lay before them. Meanwhile the Syracusans had gone on before them, and at a point where the road ascends a steep hill called the Acraean height, and there is a precipitous ravine on either side, were blocking up the pass by a wall. On the next day the Athenians advanced, although again impeded by the numbers of the enemy's cavalry who rode alongside, and of their javelin-men who threw darts at them. For a long time the Athenians maintained the struggle, but at last retired



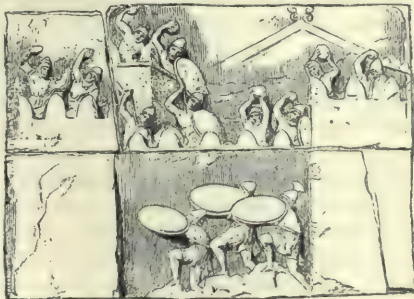
COIN WITH MOUNTED SPEARMAN.



to their own encampment. Their supplies were now cut off, because the horsemen circumscribed their movements.

In the morning they started early and resumed their march. They pressed onwards to the hill where the way was barred, and found in front of them the Syracusan infantry drawn up to defend the wall, in deep array, for the pass was narrow. Whereupon the Athenians advanced and assaulted the barrier, but the enemy, who were numerous and had the advantage of position, threw missiles upon them from the hill, which was steep, and so, not being able to force their way, they again retired and rested.

During the conflict, as is often the case in the fall of the year, there came a storm of rain and thunder, whereby the Athenians were yet more disheartened, for they thought that everything was conspiring to their destruction. While they were resting Gylippus and the Syracusans despatched a division of their army to raise a wall behind them across the road by which they had come; but the Athenians sent some of their own troops and frustrated their intention.



STORMING A WALL.

They then retired with their whole army in the direction of the plain and passed the night. On the following day they again advanced. The Syracusans now surrounded and attacked them on every side, and wounded many of them. If the Athenians advanced they retreated, but charged them when they retired, falling especially upon the hindmost of them, in the hope that, if they could put to flight a few at a time, they might strike a panic into the whole army. In this fashion the Athenians struggled on for a long time, and having advanced about three-quarters of a mile rested in the plain. The Syracusans then left them and returned to their own encampment.

The army was now in a miserable plight, being in want of every necessary; and by the continual assaults of the enemy great numbers of the soldiers had been wounded. Nicias and Demosthenes, perceiving their condition, resolved during the night to light as many watch-fires as possible and to lead off their forces. They intended to take another route and march towards the sea in the direction opposite to that from which the Syracusans were watching them. Now their whole line of march lay, not towards Catana, but towards the other side of Sicily, in the direction of Camarina and Gela, and the cities, Hellenic or Barbarian, of that region. So they lighted numerous fires and departed in the night. And then, as constantly happens in armies, especially in very great ones, and as might be expected when they were marching by night in an enemy's country, and with the enemy from whom they were flying not far off, there arose a panic among them, and they fell into confusion. The army of Nicias, which led the way, kept together, and was considerably in advance, but that of Demosthenes, which was the larger half, got severed from the other division, and marched in less order. At daybreak they succeeded in reaching the sea, and striking into the Helorine road marched along it, intending as soon as they arrived at the river Cacyparis to follow up the stream through the interior of the island.

They were expecting that the Sicels for whom they had sent would meet them on this road. When they had reached the river they found there also a guard of the Syracusans cutting off the passage by a wall and palisade. They forced their way through, and, crossing the river, passed on towards another river which is called the Erineus, this being the direction in which their guides led them.

When daylight broke and the Syracusans and their allies saw that the Athenians had departed, most of them thought that Gylippus had let them go on purpose, and were very angry with him. They easily found the line of their retreat, and quickly following, came up with them about the time of the mid-day meal. The troops of Demosthenes were last ; they were marching slowly and in disorder, not having recovered from the panic of the previous night, when they were overtaken by the Syracusans, who immediately fell upon them and fought. Separated as they were from the others, they were easily hemmed in by the Syracusan cavalry and driven into a narrow space. The division of Nicias was as much as six miles in advance, for he marched faster, thinking that their safety depended at such a time, not in remaining and fighting, if they could avoid it, but in retreating as quickly as they could, and resisting only when they were positively compelled. Demosthenes, on the other hand, who had been more incessantly harassed throughout the retreat, because marching last he was first attacked by the enemy, now, when he saw the Syracusans pursuing him, instead of pressing onward, had ranged his army in order of battle. Thus lingering he was surrounded, and he and the Athenians under his command were in the greatest danger and confusion. For they were crushed into a walled enclosure, having a road on both sides and planted thickly with olive-trees, and missiles were hurled at them from all points. The Syracusans naturally preferred this mode of attack to a regular engagement. For to risk themselves against desperate men would have been only playing into the hands of the Athenians. Moreover, every one was sparing of his life ; their good fortune was already assured, and they did not want to fall in the hour of victory. Even by this irregular mode of fighting they thought that they could overpower and capture the Athenians.

And so when they had gone on all day assailing them with missiles from every quarter, and saw that they were quite worn out with their wounds and all their other sufferings, Gylippus and the Syracusans made a proclamation, first of all to the islanders, that any of them who pleased might come over to them and have their freedom. But only a few cities accepted the offer. At length an agreement was made for the entire force under Demosthenes. Their arms were to be surrendered, but no one was to suffer death, either from violence or from imprisonment, or from want of the bare means of life. So they all surrendered, being in number six thousand, and gave up what money they had. This they threw into the hollows of shields, and filled four. The captives were at once taken to the city. On the same day Nicias and his division reached the river Erineus, which he crossed, and halted his army on a rising ground.

"On the following day he was overtaken by the Syracusans, who told him that Demosthenes had surrendered, and bade him do the same. He, not believing them, procured a truce while he sent a horseman to go and see. Upon the return of the horseman bringing assurance of the fact, he sent a herald to Gylippus and the Syracusans, saying that he would agree, on behalf of the Athenian state, to pay the expenses which the Syracusans had



incurred in the war, on condition that they should let his army go ; until the money was paid he would give Athenian citizens as hostages, a man for a talent. Gylippus and the Syracusans would not accept these proposals, but attacked and surrounded this division of the army as well as the other, and hurled missiles at them from every side until the evening. They too were grievously in want of food and necessaries. Nevertheless they meant to wait for the dead of the night and then to proceed. They were just resuming their arms, when the Syracusans discovered them and raised the Paean. The Athenians, perceiving that they were detected, laid down their arms again, with the exception of about three hundred men who broke through the enemy's guard and made their escape in the darkness as best they could.

"When the day dawned Nicias led forward his army, and the Syracusans and the allies again assailed them on every side, hurling javelins and other missiles at them. The Athenians hurried on to the river Assinarus. They hoped to gain a little relief if they forded the river, for the mass of horsemen and other troops overwhelmed and crushed them ; and they were worn out by fatigue and thirst. But no sooner did they reach the water than they lost all order and rushed in ; every man was trying to cross first, and, the enemy pressing upon them at the same time, the passage of the river became hopeless. Being compelled to keep close together they fell one upon another, and trampled each other under foot : some at once perished, pierced by their own spears ; others got entangled in the baggage and were carried down the stream. The Syracusans stood upon the further bank of the river, which was steep, and hurled missiles from above on the Athenians, who were huddled together in the deep bed of the stream and for the most part were drinking greedily. The Peloponnesians came down the bank and slaughtered them, falling chiefly upon those who were in the river. Whereupon the water at once became foul, but was drunk all the same, although muddy and dyed with blood, and the crowd fought for it.

"At last, when the dead bodies were lying in heaps upon one another in the water, and the army was utterly undone, some perishing in the river, and any who escaped being cut off by the cavalry, Nicias surrendered to Gylippus, in whom he had more confidence than in the Syracusans. He entreated him and the Lacedæmonians to do what they pleased with himself, but not to go on killing the men. So Gylippus gave the word to make prisoners. Thereupon the survivors, not including however a large number whom the soldiers concealed, were brought in alive. As for the three hundred who had broken through the guard in the night, the Syracusans sent in pursuit and seized them. The total of the public prisoners when collected was not great ; for many were appropriated by the soldiers, and the whole of Sicily was full of them, they not having capitulated like the troops under Demosthenes. A large number also perished ; the slaughter at the river being very great, quite as great as any which took place in the Sicilian war ; and not a few had fallen in the frequent attacks which were made upon the Athenians during their march. Still many escaped, some at the time, others ran away after an interval of slavery, and all these found refuge at Catana.

"The Syracusans and their allies collected their forces and returned with the spoil, and as many prisoners as they could take with them, into the city. The captive Athenians and allies they deposited in the quarries, which they thought would be the safest place of confinement. Nicias and Demosthenes they put to the sword, although against the will of Gylippus. For Gylippus thought that to carry home with him to Lacedæmon the generals of the



enemy, over and above all his other successes, would be a brilliant triumph. One of them, Demosthenes, happened to be the greatest foe, and the other the greatest friend of the Lacedæmonians, both in the same matter of Pylos and Sphacteria. For Nicias had taken up their cause, and had persuaded the Athenians to make the peace which set at liberty the prisoners taken in the island. The Lacedæmonians were grateful to him for the service, and this was the main reason why he trusted Gylippus and surrendered himself to him. But certain Syracusans, who had been in communication with him, were afraid (such was the report) that on some suspicion of their guilt he might be put to the torture and bring trouble on them in the hour of their prosperity. Others and especially the Corinthians, feared that, being rich, he might by bribery escape and do them further mischief. So the Syracusans gained the consent of the allies and had him executed. For these or the like reasons he suffered death. No one of the Hellenes in my time was less deserving of so miserable an end ; for he lived in the practice of every virtue. Those who were imprisoned in the quarries were at the beginning of their captivity harshly treated by the Syracusans. There were great numbers of them, and they were crowded in a deep and narrow place. At first the sun by day was still scorching and suffocating, for they had no roof over their heads, while the autumn nights were cold, and the extremes of temperature engendered violent disorders. Being cramped for room they had to do everything on the same spot. The corpses of those who died from their wounds, exposure to the weather, and the like, lay heaped one upon another. The smells were intolerable, and they were at the same time afflicted by hunger and thirst. During eight months they were allowed only about half a pint of water and a pint of food a day. Every kind of misery which could befall man in such a place befell them. This was the condition of all the captives for about ten weeks. At length the Syracusans sold them, with the exception of the Athenians and of any Sicilian or Italian Greeks who had sided with them in the war. The whole number of the public prisoners is not accurately known, but they were not less than seven thousand.

Of all the Hellenic actions which took place in this war, or indeed of all Hellenic actions which are on record, this was the greatest—the most glorious to the victors, the most ruinous to the vanquished ; for they were utterly and at all points defeated, and their sufferings were prodigious. Fleet and army perished from the face of the earth ; nothing was saved, and of the many who went forth few returned home.

Thus ended the Sicilian expedition.

### CHAPTER III.—XENOPHON.

I.—Xenophon's Relation to Thucydides. His Life. The Anabasis. II.—The Hellenica. Qualities of Xenophon's Style. The Memorabilia. III.—The Cyropædia, an Historical Novel. IV.—Xenophon's Minor Writings. The Possible Reasons for his Great Fame. His General, but Safe, Mediocrity. V.—Extracts.

#### I.

NATURALLY enough the followers of Thucydides took pains to avoid the obscurity of their great predecessor. Xenophon, for example, in his *Hellenica*, in which he takes up the thread of history where Thucydides had laid it down, and carries on the narration to the battle of Mantinea in 363 B.C., writes simply and easily without imitating the severe compression of his master. This change was necessary, and may be compared with the similar improvement of the French prose style between Montaigne and Boileau, or with the swift development of fluency between Milton and Dryden. In these cases the underlying cause was the same, namely, the new interest in countless novel subjects, and, above all, the abundant practice, which soon settled the laws of syntax and left old-fashioned obscurities forgotten and neglected. Yet, with all his difficulties, Thucydides far overtops Xenophon, who is distinctly a second-class man whose work has been preserved among that of men of far greater importance. This good fortune is due in good measure, doubtless, to admiration for his lucid expression. The winnowing of time has buried almost everything but the very best of Greek work; Xenophon, however, is left to show us that even a Greek could be distinctly commonplace. There is but little chance that writers of the present time will be taught to overlook the importance of a good style, but behind that attractive and useful accomplishment exists the necessity of having something of real importance to say. Xenophon wrote with delightful simplicity, but the quality of his work, the message that he had to deliver, would have given him a higher place among Roman writers than that which he holds among the Greek. His position as successor to Thucydides, and in a way a rival of Plato, is one that he fills but meagerly, for Thucydides remains without a rival, as the one writer who, by rigidly suppressing his own personality, has made his personality almost the most impressive in the whole world of letters.

Xenophon was born in Athens at an uncertain date, though probably



not far from the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, 431 B.C. He grew up then a constant witness of the gradual defeat of his native city, but also under the influence of the great intellectual stimulants with which that decay was accompanied. He early became a devoted adherent of Socrates, who was then conveying his lessons to any one who would listen to him. The story runs that Xenophon first made



XENOPHON.

the great philosopher's acquaintance in this wise: he was passing through a narrow alley-way, when Socrates barred his passage with a stick that he held in his hand, and asked the boy if he knew where provisions were sold. "In the market-place," was the answer. "And where are men made good and noble?" Xenophon had no answer ready for that, and Socrates bade him follow him and learn. The boy appears to have regarded Socrates as friend whose advice would be of service to him, for in the year 402 B.C., on receiving from a friend named Proxenus an invitation to come to Sardis and enter the service of Cyrus, younger brother of Artaxerxes, King of Persia, he consulted Socrates as to the wisdom of this course. Socrates

feared that he would get into trouble with the Athenians by allying himself with Cyrus, who, it was believed, had aided the Spartans in their war against Athens, hence he advised his young friend to consult the oracle at Delphi. But Xenophon ingeniously asked Apollo to what god he should sacrifice in order to accomplish his intended journey most propitiously, and sacrificed, in obedience, to Zeus the king. Socrates blamed him for this boyish deceit, but bade him go.

This journey was a most eventful one, and is fully described in Xenophon's *Anabasis*. From this book it appears that Cyrus, who was, as has just been said, the younger brother of Artaxerxes, King of Persia, feeling himself defrauded of his just rights, determined upon



making a bold and secret effort to win the crown of that country. For this purpose he gathered together a force of Greeks, whose military skill and bravery were well attested by the defeat of Persia fifty years before, under the pretense that he meant to make an attack on the mountaineers of Pisidia. The Greeks were in no way averse to what promised to be a lucrative campaign, and started off in March or April, 401 B.C., with no suspicion of the real purpose of their Persian leader. Cyrus, who was a young man but little over twenty, kept his counsel well, and distinguished himself from other Oriental potentates by the exact performance of every promise. He led the band of about ten thousand men, a number afterwards somewhat increased, directly inland, and only when they were far from the coast did he disclose his real purpose. After some little hesitation, the Greeks, tempted by further liberal promises, decided to push on. The advance met with no opposition until Cyrus encountered Artaxerxes with his army at Cunaxa, only about fifty miles distant from Babylonia. Here a battle was fought in which the Greek contingent was successful, and the rout of Artaxerxes would have been complete, if a body of Spartans had not disobeyed orders by keeping close to a river instead of advancing. Cyrus, observing that Artaxerxes was about to make a flank movement on the victorious body of Greeks that had wholly swept aside the Persian left, led a charge of his body-guard of six hundred men against the Persian center where the king was, and in the attack Cyrus was slain. The ten thousand Greeks now found themselves, at the beginning of September, in a strange country, far from the sea-coast, confronted by a formidable host, and without a leader. A more difficult position can not be imagined, especially for the Greeks with their repugnance to long excursions from the familiar seaboard.

It was at this crisis, when all the Greeks were in absolute despair, that Xenophon came forward, inspired by a dream of his father's house being struck by lightning and set on fire, a dream that was like an oracle in its capacity for opposing explanations. He at once addressed his fellow-officers, encouraging them not to abandon hope, reminding them of the previous victories of the Greeks over the Persians, and of the perils they ran in placing any confidence in such treacherous foes. They thus plucked up their courage and determined to do their best to accomplish what had seemed an impossible task. The command was divided among five officers, Xenophon being one of the two appointed to take charge of the rear-guard. The next morning the army began its march, formed in a hollow square, enclosing the baggage. The retreating forces were much harassed by the Persian cavalry during the first day, and Xenophon, who was really the soul of the army, mounted fifty men on baggage-horses with the further aid of

two hundred expert slingers, a device that was perfectly successful even when they were attacked by one thousand cavalry and four thousand archers and slingers. They crossed the Carduchian mountains, fighting uninterruptedly for seven days with the natives, but freed at last from the more formidable Persian host, and forded the river Centrites into Armenia. They were now, towards the end of November, on the high table-lands of that country, exposed to snow-storms and cold for which they were ill-prepared. Many perished and all suffered from exposure to the fierceness of the weather, as they wandered without a guide for six days. When they got down to a



A HOLLOW SQUARE.

lower level, it was but to meet new enemies in the various Georgian tribes who attacked them on every side. At last from the top of Mount Theches they got sight of the distant Euxine.

"When the men who were in front," says Xenophon, "had mounted the height, and looked down upon the sea, a great shout proceeded from them; and Xenophon and the rear-guard, when they heard it, thought that some new enemies were assailing their front. . . . But as the noise still increased, and drew nearer, and as those who came up from time to time kept running at full speed to join those who were continually shouting, the cries growing louder as the men became more numerous, it appeared to Xenophon that it must be something of very great importance. Mounting his horse, therefore, and taking with him Lycius and the cavalry, he hastened forward to give aid, when presently they heard the soldiers shouting, 'The sea, the sea!' and cheering on one another. They then all began to run, the rear-guard as well as the rest, and the baggage-cattle and horses were put to their speed. When they had all reached the top the men embraced one another and their generals and captains with tears in their eyes."



Their troubles were not over, however, although the obstacles that immediately threatened them were speedily overcome. The Macrones were drawn up to resist their march, but among the ten thousand there happened to be one of that tribe who was able to explain matters to their satisfaction, so that they aided the progress of the retreating Greeks. The Colchians persisted in their hostile intent until the Greeks charged on them, when they relented and fled. The most dangerous foe that they found hereabout was some poisonous honey that disabled several of the men for a few days. Two more marches brought the 8600 survivors at last to Trapezus (now Trebizond) where they rested for a month. Their retreat was now over in February of the year 400 B.C. Thanks in great measure to the tact and ingenuity of Xenophon they had escaped from a powerful foe, and had survived strange perils that had at first seemed insuperable. They brought with them not only a well-earned reputation for bravery, but also abundant testimony of the weakness of Persia. That empire, with its vast forces and enormous wealth, had always seemed a dangerous antagonist; now its reputation was gone, and although for some time it continued to subsidize one Greek state against another, its fate was sealed. Alexander the Great, when he had conquered Greece, conquered Persia, and put a final blow to all danger from the old Oriental monarchies.

The remaining two books of the *Anabasis* recount the further adventures of this army, which was driven by want to enroll itself among the forces of the exiled Thracian ruler Seuthes. For two months they fought successfully, but Seuthes broke his promises, and refused to make the agreed payments. Xenophon especially aroused his dislike, and even the soldiers began to detest their old leader, who, however, was able to win back their confidence. Then messengers arrived from the Spartan Thibron, inviting them to join him in an attack on their old enemy Tissaphernes, the Persian satrap. This proposal they accepted eagerly, especially when Seuthes consented to pay at least a part of the sum he owed them. But Xenophon, when he left him, was in such poverty that he had to raise money by selling his horse in Lampsacus. Soon, however, fortune changed, and, by a lucky turn of events, Xenophon was able to return to Greece a rich man. This fortunate result he ascribed to the special interposition of Zeus the Gracious; that it was satisfactory, may be gathered from his statement that he was now able "even to serve a friend." Many of his companions doubtless returned with him; those who remained were merged into the Spartan army that succeeded in freeing many of the Greek cities in Asia Minor from Persian rule.

The *Anabasis* has a charm that is not always found in the writings



of Xenophon, in that it describes the author's own adventures and his own very creditable conduct in the most trying conditions. The style has a delightful, Bunyan-like simplicity, and the tact with which Xenophon exercised the Athenian's birthright, the gift of oratory, renders the book instructive as well as entertaining. The account of the intrigues that were woven about this formidable little host, which was rather feared than loved, although much condensed in the abstract given above, shows Xenophon's skill as well as the disintegrating forces that were at work in Greece. His future career further illustrates these baleful processes: within three years after his return he was fighting under the Lacedæmonian King Agesilaus against the Persians in Asia Minor and when the Athenians joined hands with the Persians, he took part in the invasion of northern Greece and fought against the Athenians and their Theban auxiliaries when they were defeated at Coroneia, in 394 B.C. For his lack of patriotism he was formally banished.

Yet this statement proves rather the complexity of Hellenic politics than any personal treachery of Xenophon's. When governments perpetually shifted their ground, honorable men might well regard consistency as something superior to blind allegiance. Xenophon had returned to Athens shortly after the execution of his old friend Socrates, and of their friendship he left a monument in his *Memorabilia*. Moreover Xenophon had an especial admiration for some of the Spartan qualities, that were now employed against his old antagonists the Persians, and it must have been with content that he settled down in the new home granted him by the Lacedæmonians at Scillus, a village about two miles distant from Olympia. Here he built an altar and a temple, and found the occupation in which he most delighted in hunting the abundant game. Here, too, it was that he wrote his later books. In his old age he was driven out from this pleasant retreat by war and forced to seek refuge in Corinth. The Athenians and Spartans were now united against the Thebans, and his sentence of banishment was repealed. He sent his two sons to Athens, and both of them fought at Mantinea; the story runs that when the news was brought to the aged father, he happened to be offering a sacrifice, with a garland on his head. This he took off on hearing the sad tidings, but when he heard that his son had died nobly, he replaced it, and refused to weep, because, he said, he knew that his son was mortal. He is said to have died at the age of 90.

## II.

Mention has already been made of the *Hellenica*, or Greek history, which Xenophon brought down to the battle of Mantinea, but no

abstract can be given of it which shall not be a mere condensation of the turbid stream of Grecian politics and conflicts. The book tells its story briefly and simply; its artless grace was much admired by the ancients, who called its author the "Attic bee," but it wholly lacks the fascinating credulity and the serious, childlike earnestness of Herodotus, as well as the austerer qualities of Thucydides. Indeed, one might not go wrong in saying that the pleasing moderation of Xenophon's style, the song of the Attic bee, was the characteristic note of his temperate thought; it most harmoniously matched the comparative tepidity of his intelligence, as that graceful style always does. We see the same correspondence throughout all literature; the somewhat similar ease and grace of Addison were the expression of a corresponding moderation in the message he had to deliver: civilization, decorum, elegance, were the subject of his graceful lessons, and his style well represented what he had undertaken to preach. A more serious message requires and secures a more impressive style. This is what we notice in a comparison between Æschylus and Euripides, one, as it were, Titan, and the other a man of complex civilization; the language of the older poet being as majestic as his sublime thought, under which he staggers, while the other possesses all fluency that clear thought alone can give. In Thucydides, again, we notice besides the clumsiness inherent in the newness of prose, his frequent stumbling over the intensity and complexity of what he had to say, while Xenophon with his less piercing vision knew no such difficulties. The statement that his style was like Addison's does not contradict this, it merely enforces its noticeable freedom from obscurity; its rhythmical, almost excessive modulations show that it was of course subject to the conditions that make all literature.

The upshot of this statement is but the affirmation of the undeniable fact that Xenophon possessed his full share of mediocrity. Thucydides hides all personal feeling, but his hand trembles with the effort: Xenophon's impartiality, in the *Hellenica* at least, is more nearly that of indifference. Yet in the *Memorabilia*, in which he records the conversation of Socrates, he was certainly not indifferent, and he has left posterity a most valuable amount of testimony with regard to that eminent philosopher. Indeed, it is to Plato and Xenophon that we are indebted for by far the largest part of our knowledge of Socrates, and while Plato has idealized him, Xenophon has possibly erred in the other direction by neglecting some of the more delicate qualities of his subtle character. Still the book is of great value, in the first place because it testifies to the activity of intellectual life among the Greeks, that an event of so great importance as the execution of Socrates should have called forth a protest from one of his friends, and, secondly, because of the information that it gives. The charges that



were brought against Socrates were twofold—first, that he was guilty of impiety towards the gods, and secondly, that he was a corrupter of youth. This is the indictment to which Xenophon pleads. Besides a general defense of his old friend and teacher, he recites a number of the conversations of Socrates to show his devotion to the gods, and the benefits that he did to men of all conditions of life. He makes it clear that Socrates always sought to distinguish good from evil and to inculcate righteousness. The conversations are most vividly reported, with a charming air of reality, and are so arranged in four books as to cover the various forms of instruction which the philosopher was never tired of inculcating. Thus, in the first book Xenophon makes mention of the conversations of Socrates concerning the duties of men towards the gods; in the second, on the social relations; in the third, on public duties; in the fourth, he shows how Socrates tried to find out the capacity of each one of his interlocutors, how it was to be directed, and how made complete. The whole book sets Socrates in a most favorable light, and casts a corresponding cloud on the Athenian democracy. The question that it calls forth will come up again in discussing Plato, who brings further testimony concerning these events, and it will then be seen how excellent was the impression made upon two very different observers by the immortal Socrates. Without Xenophon's testimony we should be very much in the dark.

### III.

The only other one of Xenophon's long works is the *Cyropædia*, or the Education of Cyrus, a historical novel. We have already seen the Greeks mingling fiction with their history, for in writing the *Anabasis* it is fair to presume that the author made over his speeches with an eye to rhetorical effect, and in this earliest European novel we find, by a natural transition, a historical basis underlying the story. Yet the historical basis is very slight; Cyrus, and the various nations whom he conquered, and ruled were by no means unfamiliar to the Greeks, but to use the *Cyropædia* as a document for studying the Persians would be like consulting *Rasselas* for information concerning the geography and civil polity of Abyssinia, or pursuing archæological investigations with regard to the prehistoric period in Fénelon's *Telemachus*. The persons and names were chosen apparently for no other reason than that they were on men's lips; the most rigid rule with all writers is economy of invention. The scene had to be laid in foreign parts, and Xenophon selected Persia a country that was in people's thoughts, and one about which he knew something.

The Cyrus who is the hero of the book is an imaginary being, with



no resemblance to the real possessor of that name; it is his flawless character, wise education, and subsequent career of uniform success that compose the story, which seems meant to show an ideal that Xenophon regards as the most practicable and praiseworthy. Some of the laws concerning the training of the young which Xenophon describes are derived from Sparta rather than from Persia. Boys, until the age of sixteen or seventeen, were brought up together under a semi-military discipline, learning justice, as Xenophon says, meaning that they took charge of the various misdemeanors of one another, inflicting punishment, and acquiring habits of self-control. They moreover began to practice the use of arms. During the next ten years, they hunted wild beasts and further hardened themselves for war by athletic exercises. This training was very different from that which the young Athenians received, yet its obvious advantages, as they seemed to Xenophon, early attracted his admiration. Possibly, the fact that he transferred the system to Persia, with reckless disregard of probability, goes to show the aversion of the Athenians to learning from shows his high opinion of the Athenian system; as a soldier of fortune he was free to adopt a lofty cosmopolitanism that was also encouraged by a desire to help his fellow-countrymen out of their difficulties. The fate of Socrates must have shown his friends what further perils resulted from the demoralization of Athens. Even on its own ground, so to speak, the training of the intellect shows itself a failure.



GREEK HUNTER.

their enemies. In modern times, as we all know, it is a persuasive, if not a sound, argument, when others fail, against any needed reform in political business, that it is English and so monarchical, or in education that it is German and so impractical. It is easy to imagine how much more frequently this unworthy appeal to the passions must have been used, when we consider the vigor of local prejudices among the Greeks, and the fact that the Athenians were sore over the disgrace inflicted upon them by their successful foes.

Xenophon continually shows his high opinion of the Athenian system; as a soldier of fortune he was free to adopt a lofty cosmopolitanism that was also encouraged by a desire to help his fellow-countrymen out of their difficulties. The fate of Socrates must have shown his friends what further perils resulted from the demoralization of Athens. Even on its own ground, so to speak, the training of the intellect shows itself a failure.

Certainly the picture that is drawn of the success of Cyrus was of a sort to encourage those who agreed with Xenophon regarding educa-

tion. He conquered all his foes without difficulty, and if, as is said, Alexander the Great learned the weakness of Persia from the *Anabasis*, it may not be fanciful to suppose that the *Cyropædia* presented him



DISCOBOLUS CASTING.  
(In the Palazzo Massimi, Rome.)

a certain sort of ideal representation of a great conqueror which he undertook to verify in his own life, just as the great Spanish generals who won possession of Mexico imitated the spirit that inspired the

fantastic romances on which their youth had been nourished. If this is the case, Alexander indubitably followed a good model, for Cyrus is as wise, discreet, and intelligent a ruler as any crown-prince ever



DISCOBOLUS RESTING.  
(In the Vatican.)

promised to be. Besides the notion of universal dominion which was shared by Cyrus and Alexander, we find other coincidences that support this hypothesis. Thus, the self-restraint which Cyrus in the



story imposed upon himself with regard to the beautiful Panthea—an incident that forms the first love-tale in European literature—was repeated by Alexander in his chivalrous treatment of the wife of Darius, who was said to be the most beautiful woman in Asia. When Alexander punished Batis by dragging him tied to the tail of his chariot in imitation of the indignity inflicted by Achilles on the body of Hector, in the *Iliad*, he openly showed the same spirit; it is certainly possible that he might have been also influenced by a romance which seemed to prophesy his success. In his treatment of his conquered foes, winning them to his side by tact and generosity, he also resembled the imaginary Cyrus, as well as in his sympathy with philosophers and men of learning.

The book was probably more or less inspired by Xenophon's intimacy with Socrates; it at any rate contains an undoubted allusion to his death in a scene representing Tigranes, the son of the Armenian chief, in conversation with Cyrus. That great man asks him what had become of a certain sophist with whom he had seen him; Tigranes tells him that his father had put him to death. "And why?" "Out of jealousy, Cyrus," answered the Armenian father, "I could not help hating that man, because I thought he was stealing my son's heart away from me. My son admired him more than he did me." This was the very ground on which was made the basis of the accusation against Socrates, that he taught sons to hate their fathers. And in his farewell speech upon his death-bed, Cyrus expresses his belief in the immortality of the soul in a way that reminds the reader of the *Apology* of Socrates. Possibly in other places Xenophon repeats the words of his master, extending his influence in a very different way from that in which Plato immortalized his name, but with perhaps more effect. The book was much admired in antiquity, and even now it is infinitely more readable than hosts of romances that have lived their day of popularity; and however it may have been with Alexander the Great, we know that Cicero recommended it to his brother Quintus as a manual of wise instruction for a ruler, and that it was a favorite of Scipio Africanus.

#### IV.

The *Apology* of Socrates, of which mention has just been made, is one of the many minor books of Xenophon that have floated down to us with all the security of mediocrity when far more important works have wholly perished. It consists of a speech ascribed to Socrates in which he defends himself against his accusers, and explains his willingness to meet his death. Unfortunately the genuineness of the *Apology*

is extremely doubtful. Socrates again appears as a prominent person in the Symposium, or Banquet, which represents a fashionable supper-party at Athens, where the great philosopher turns the conversation with ease and eloquence into good advice for his young friends. Plato, as we shall see, wrote another Banquet, in which Socrates was the first figure, but he lent it another and profounder quality than that which Xenophon gave to his charming sketch. In the book on Husbandry, again, we find Socrates taking an important part in the conversation regarding what is the oldest as well, perhaps, as the crudest of sciences. The book is attractive, and possibly it was from the method here employed by Xenophon that Plato conceived the notion of his Socratic dialogues. Here, however, we find Socrates represented in a very different light from that in which the later writer has set him. He is a model of domestic wisdom and kindliness. The book presents an attractive picture of the rustic life of the old Greeks, and was highly esteemed by the Romans.

Besides these writings we have Xenophon's enthusiastic eulogy of Agesilaus, the Spartan, admiration of Spartan ways being one of this author's characteristics; an imaginary conversation between Hiero, tyrant of Syracuse, and Simonides, in which the miseries of a despot's life are portrayed; political essays on Lacedæmonia and Athens; and



HORSE-TRAINING.

an essay on the training of a horse and similar subjects, in which he repeats his familiar praise of hunting and exercise as training for the young. Much that he says is as true now and as valuable as on the day it was written. Such, for example, is the undeniably sound advice not to approach a horse when under the influence of anger; for anger is thoughtless and leads men to actions which they afterwards repent. Xenophon's message at the best was not a great one, but he repeated and impressed it so carefully on his readers that his influence was great and lasting. Indeed, his very moderation and unflinching grace have







THE DROMOS IN SPARTA.



always found him admirers, while greater, stronger men have had to live through periods of indifference or actual obloquy. No one is really great with impunity; a time will come when majesty is held to be roughness; naturalness, offensive simplicity; eloquence bombast; but good-nature and grace, even if they arouse no enthusiasm, are always pleasing, and it is probably to the possession of these qualities that Xenophon owes a good part of his reputation. He at least never offends.

More than this, the ready intelligibility of his language is but a sign of the clearness and simplicity of his thought, and this is never tired of busying itself with the attractiveness and the utility of a life of virtue. He is not a moralist who leads enthusiastic disciples to exalted heights of renunciation and unselfishness, but rather a sort of Greek Franklin whose ideal is a good citizen. Not every one when fretted by worldly cares and disappointments can recall the lofty truths which only unfold their inspiring secret after long and arduous contemplation, but Xenophon's principle, that virtue, happiness, and beauty are three faces of a single truth, is readily grasped and assimilated. The world, too, was ready to approve another of the main inspirations of his work, namely, his unconcealed admiration for the civil polity that gave strength to Sparta in its struggle with Athens. The conflict between those two civilizations was a many-sided one; it was due not merely to the natural hostility of one state to another, to the simple objection of one powerful nation to the leadership of a rival, but it was embittered by jealousy and by the instinctive dislike that an aristocracy always feels for its democratic neighbors. Instances abound in modern history, as in the feeling of the imperial governments of the Continent for England and America. This last was a most important element, not merely in the Peloponnesian war, but in its continued effect upon men's minds for many generations.

Sparta was an aristocracy, and possessed what we may call a strong government which demanded and kept a firm hold upon every citizen. Athens was a democracy resting on wholly opposite principles, when the freedom of the individual citizen was the corner-stone of its civic existence. We are mainly concerned at this moment with its influence upon literature, and we have seen what this was in the study of the magnificent works wherein the eager life of the time found expression. Xenophon, however, was an aristocrat by birth and by feeling, and the views that he expressed with ingenuity regarding the superiority of the Spartan to the Athenian political system became common in Athens as a natural result of the excesses of the democracy and of its defeat in the war. The unjust death of Socrates had an enormous effect in forming men's opinions; and the general overthrow of all that

was held precious produced the same result that repeated itself in modern history with men like Wordsworth, who hailed the French Revolution with delight, and were afterwards horrified into the condemnation of their earlier raptures. Henceforth Athens was a divided city, torn by intestine strife, or at least by divergent counsels, with the aristocracy and the democracy regarding each other with active hostility. It lost its previous magnificent unity; how much this was imperilled in the Peloponnesian war has been evident in the hostility that Aristophanes showed to Euripides. That schism extended further until the Athenian democracy failed, as we judge human failure, and in the futile arguments of Demosthenes, in the equally powerless eloquence of Socrates, we shall find further illustrations of the hopelessness of all attempts to make over the past as we have already seen it in the plays of Aristophanes.

Xenophon's repugnance to the democracy was, however, not a mere personal quality of his own, but also in great measure an expression of the natural change of sentiments which was coming over a whole generation of men. Instances of its power with him abound in all his works, as in the veiled encomiums of Sparta in his imaginary pictures of Persia, and throughout the *Hellenica* when he has occasion to point out the excesses of the democracy in contrast with the greater wisdom of the aristocracy. Thus, when he had to speak of a massacre at Corinth, where a number of nobles were put to death, he felt and expressed all the repugnance that would have animated an Englishman at the beginning of this century when he spoke of the French Revolution. To be sure, Xenophon condemns the bloody vengeance that the Thirty Tyrants in Athens took upon the democracy, but it is only with temperate and cooler indignation. Generally, to be sure, it is Sparta that receives all the praise, not from treachery or a disgraceful lack of patriotism, but simply because the Lacedæmonians were the best representatives of the party of law and order. Their principles appeared to be the only ones that could save Greece from anarchy, and to advocate them seemed to Xenophon the direct duty of an honest man who had the good of his country at heart. It was not a new influx of brotherly love that brought Russians, Austrians, Prussians, and Englishmen to unite against Napoleon Bonaparte, but a desire to save society; and, too, in the case before us, after the failure of democracy, aristocratic principles held out the only hope of escaping ruin, and strict adherence to Athens was, in the eyes of Xenophon and the many who agreed with him, only a narrow and pernicious interpretation of real duty to their country. Its liberty, it was thought, was merely licentiousness; the universal right of speech seemed to give room for the power of demagogues; the rule of the multitude was



mob rule, and in comparison no praise was too warm for the institutions of Sparta, which kept the citizens, from infancy to old age, bound up in a narrow circle of clearly defined duties, and left the supreme control in the hands of a small, select number of men. Thenceforth, we may see the prevalence of these views not merely in Athens, where it prevailed against the fervid eloquence of Demosthenes, and so opened the gates to the Macedonians, but throughout the entire civilization of the subsequent ages. It does not cover the ground to say that Xenophon *laconized*, as they called it, or became an adherent of Sparta; the whole world laconized. It looked with horror on a method of government which had failed completely and ended in violence and anarchy. To be sure, the material power of Sparta lasted for but a very short time, and its defeat at Leuktra, in 371 B.C., destroyed many of the hopes that had gathered around it, but the underlying spirit of confidence in aristocracy and of distrust in democracy survived the downfall of its strongest supporter. The condition of Athens was not materially improved by the overthrow of Sparta, and the fate of the city served as a solemn warning against all sympathy with democracy. A chapter of human experience seemed closed.

In Xenophon the world saw a man who was a powerful and eloquent ally of their cause, and, naturally enough, every effort was made to point out his importance. He had the good fortune to express what was the animating principle of future civilizations, namely, absolute confidence in a strong government, and a Greek who spoke words of what seemed the highest wisdom was sure to be admired, especially when he brought to this side some of the authority which had been acquired by men with very different views. Some of the light of those who lived before him in happier days still illuminated him; he held an important position as the man who continued the history of Thucydides, as the biographer of Socrates, and that gave added weight to the writer who pointed out the path which the world was to follow for many centuries. It is also interesting to notice how well he represents the best side of what we may call the aristocratic party. Wit, grace, unfailing decorum, what is called good sense, are his characteristic qualities; they found him enthusiastic admirers in Rome and preserved his popularity in modern times so long as men felt that material security and literary charm rested on a common groundwork of conventionality which it would be indiscreet to examine too closely. He was admirably fitted to retain the position which he soon acquired as the favorite of men whose views of the world were like his own, and it is to his excellence as a representative of what in comparison with the greatest men who preceded him is mediocrity that he owes his



long-lived fame. He was safe in the possession of what appeared to be worldly wisdom, and whatever one may think of his principles, this fact, that was so long the ideal of intelligence and security, gives Xenophon a historical importance which no change of opinions can ever justly deny him. The world will never learn anything by shutting its eyes to facts, past or present.

## V.

## THE DEATH-BED OF CYRUS THE ELDER.

FROM THE CYROPÆDIA, BOOK VIII., CHAP. VII.

After he had thus spent some considerable time, Cyrus, now in a very advanced age, takes a journey into Persia, which was the seventh from the acquisition of his empire, when his father and mother had probably been for some time dead. Cyrus made the usual sacrifices, and danced the Persian dance, according to the custom of his country, and distributed to every one presents, as usual. Then, being asleep in the royal palace, he had the following dream. There seemed to advance towards him a person with more than human majesty in his air and countenance, and to say to him: "Cyrus, prepare yourself, for you are now going to the gods!" After this appearance in his dream he awaked, and seemed assured that his end drew near. Therefore, taking along with him the victims, he sacrificed on the summit of a mountain (as is the custom in Persia) to Jove paternal, the Sun, and the rest of the gods, accompanying the sacrifices with this prayer:

"O Jove, Paternal Sun, and all ye gods! receive these sacrifices, as the completion of many worthy and handsome actions; and as grateful acknowledgments for having signified to me, both by the victims, by celestial signs, by birds, and by omens, what became me to do, and not to do. And I abundantly return you thanks, that I have been sensible of your care and protection; and that, in the course of my prosperity, I never was exalted above what became a man. I implore you now to bestow all happiness on my children, my wife, my friends, and my country; and for myself, that I may die as I have always lived."

When he had finished his sacrifices and prayer he returned home, and finding himself disposed to be quiet, he lay down. At a certain hour proper persons attended, and offered him to wash. He told them that he had rested very well. Then, at another hour, proper officers brought him his supper; but Cyrus had no appetite to eat, but seemed thirsty, and drank with pleasure. And continuing thus the second and third days, he sent for his sons, who, as it happened, had attended their father, and were then in Persia. He summoned likewise his friends, and the magistrates of Persia. When they were all met, he began in this manner:

"Children, and all of you, my friends, here present! the conclusion of my life is now at hand, which I certainly know from many symptoms. You ought, when I am dead, to act and speak of me in everything as a happy man; for, when I was a child, I seemed to have received advantage from what is esteemed worthy and handsome in children; so likewise, when I was

a youth, from what is esteemed so in young men ; so, when I came to be a man, from what is esteemed worthy and handsome in men. And I have always seemed to observe myself increase with time in strength and vigour, so that I have not found myself weaker or more infirm in my old age than in my youth. Neither do I know that I have desired or undertaken anything in which I have not succeeded. By my means my friends have been made happy, and my enemies enslaved ; and my country, at first inconsiderable in Asia, I leave in great reputation and honour. Neither do I know that I have not preserved whatever I acquired. And though, in time past, all things have succeeded according to my wishes, yet an apprehension lest, in process of time, I should see, hear, or suffer some difficulty, has not suffered me to be too much elated, or too extravagantly delighted. Now if I die, I leave you, children, behind me, (whom the gods have given me,) and I leave my country and my friends happy. Ought not I therefore, in justice, to be always remembered, and mentioned as fortunate and happy ? I must likewise declare to whom I leave my kingdom, lest that being doubtful should hereafter raise dissensions among you. Now, children, I bear an equal affection to you both ; but I direct that the elder should have the advising and conducting of affairs, as his age requires, and it is probable he has more experience. And as I have been instructed by my country and yours to give place to those elder than myself, not only brothers, but fellow-citizens, both in walking, sitting, and speaking ; so have I instructed you, from your youth, to show a regard to your elders, and to receive the like from such as were inferior to you in age ; receive then this disposition as ancient, customary, and legal. Do you therefore, Cambyzes, hold the kingdom as allotted you by the gods, and by me, so far as it is in my power. To you, Tanoaxares, I bequeath the satrapy of the Medes, Armenians, and Cadusians ; which when I allot you, I think I leave your elder brother a larger empire, and the title of a kingdom, but to you a happiness freer from care and vexation : for I do not see what human satisfaction you can need ; but you will enjoy whatever appears agreeable and pleasing to men. An affection for such things as are difficult to execute, a multitude of pains, and an impossibility of being quiet, anxiety from an emulation of my actions, forming designs yourself and having designs formed against you : these are things which must more necessarily attend a king than one in your station ; and be assured these give many interruptions to pleasure and satisfaction. Know, therefore, Cambyzes, that it is not the golden sceptre which can preserve your kingdom ; but faithful friends are a prince's truest and securest sceptre. But do not imagine that men are naturally faithful (for then they would appear so to all, as other natural endowments do), but every one must render others faithful to himself : and they are not to be procured by violence, but rather by kindness and beneficence. If therefore you would constitute other joint guardians with you of your kingdom, whom can you better begin with than him who is of the same blood with yourself ? and fellow-citizens are nearer to us than strangers, and those who live and eat with us, than those that do not. And those who have the same original, who have been nourished by the same mother, and grown up in the same house, and beloved by the same parents, and who call on the same father and mother, are not they, of all others, the nearest to us ? Do you not therefore render those advantages fruitless, by which the gods unite brothers in affinity and relation ; but to those advantages add other friendly offices, and by that means your friendship will be reciprocally solid and lasting. The taking



care of a brother is providing for oneself. To whom can the advancement of a brother be equally honourable, as to a brother? Who can show a regard to a great and powerful man equal to his brother? Who will fear to injure another, so much as him whose brother is in an exalted station? Be therefore second to none in submission and good-will to your brother, since no one can be so particularly serviceable or injurious to you. And I would have you consider how you can hope for greater advantages by obliging any one so much as him? Or whom can you assist that will be so powerful an ally in war? Or what is more infamous than want of friendship between brothers? Whom of all men, can we so handsomely pay regard to as to a brother? In a word, Cambyzes, your brother is the only one you can advance next to your person without the envy of others. Therefore, in the name of the gods, children, have regard for one another, if you are careful to do what is acceptable to me. For you ought not to imagine, you certainly know, that after I have closed this period of human life, I shall no longer exist: for neither do you now see my soul, but you conclude, from its operations, that it does exist. And have you not observed what terrors and apprehensions murderers are inspired with by those who have suffered violence from them? What racks and torture do they convey to the guilty? Or how do you think honours should have continued to be paid to the deceased, if their souls were destitute of all power and virtue? No, children, I can never be persuaded that the soul lives no longer than it dwells in this mortal body, and that it dies on its separation; for I see that the soul communicates vigour and motion to mortal bodies during its continuance in them. Neither can I be persuaded that the soul is divested of intelligence on its separation from this gross, senseless body; but it is probable that when the soul is separated, it becomes pure and entire, and then is more intelligent. It is evident that, on man's dissolution, every part of him returns to what is of the same nature with itself, except the soul; that alone is invisible, both during its presence here, and at its departure. And you may have observed that nothing resembles death so much as sleep; but then it is that the human soul appears most divine, and has a prospect of futurity; for then it is probable that the soul is most free and independent. If therefore things are as I think, and that the soul leaves the body, having regard to my soul, comply with my request. But if it be otherwise, and that the soul continuing in the body perishes with it, let nothing appear in your thoughts or actions criminal or impious, for fear of the gods, who are eternal, whose power and inspection extend over all things, and who preserve the harmony and order of the universe free from decay or defect, whose greatness and beauty is inexplicable! Next to the gods, have regard to the whole race of mankind in perpetual succession: for the gods have not concealed you in obscurity; but there is a necessity that your actions should be conspicuous to the world. If they are virtuous, and free from injustice, they will give you power and interest in all men; but if you project what is unjust against each other, no man will trust you; for no one can place a confidence in you, though his inclination to it be ever so great, when he sees you unjust, where it most becomes you to be a friend. If therefore I have not rightly instructed you what you ought to be to one another, learn it from those who lived before our time, for that will be the best lesson. For there are many who have lived affectionate parents to their children, and friends to their brothers; and some there are who have acted the opposite part towards each other. Whichsoever of these you shall observe to have been most advantageous,



you will do well in giving it the preference in your choice. But perhaps this is sufficient as to these matters. When I am dead, children, do not enshrine my body in gold, nor in silver, nor anything else; but lay it in the earth as soon as possible; for what can be more happy than to mix with the earth, which gives birth and nourishment to all things excellent and good? And as I have always hitherto borne an affection for men, so it is now most pleasing to me to incorporate with that which is beneficial to men. Now," said he, "it seems to me that my soul is beginning to leave me, in the same manner as it is probable it begins its departure with others. If therefore any of you are desirous of touching my right hand, or willing to see my face while it has life, come near to me: for, when I shall have covered it, I request, of you, children, that neither yourselves, nor any others, would look on my body. Summon all the Persians and their allies before my tomb, to rejoice for me; that I shall be then out of danger of suffering any evil, whether I shall be with the gods, or shall be reduced to nothing. As many as come, do you dismiss with all those favours that are thought proper for a happy man. And," said he, "remember this as my last and dying words. If you do kindnesses to your friends, you will be able to injure your enemies. Farewell, dear children, and tell this to your mother as from me. And all you, my friends, both such of you as are here present, and the rest who are absent—farewell!" Having said this, and taken every one by the right hand, he covered himself, and thus expired.

## THE VICTORY AND DEATH OF CYRUS THE YOUNGER.

FROM THE ANABASIS.—BOOK I., CHAP. VIII.

It was now about the time of day when the market is usually crowded, the army being near the place where they proposed to encamp, when Patagyas, a Persian, one of those whom Cyrus most confided in, was seen riding towards them full speed, his horse all in a sweat, and he calling to every one he met, both in his own language and in Greek, that the king was at hand with a vast army, marching in order of battle; which occasioned a general confusion among the Greeks, all expecting he would charge them before they had put themselves in order: but Cyrus, leaping from his car, put on his corselet, then, mounting his horse, took his javelins in his hand, ordered all the rest to arm, and every man to take his post: by virtue of which command they quickly formed themselves, Clearchus on the right wing close to the Euphrates, next to him Proxenus, and after him the rest: Menon and his men were posted on the left of the Greek army. Of the Barbarians, a thousand Paphlagonian horse, with the Greek targeteers, stood next to Clearchus on the right: upon the left Ariæus, Cyrus's lieutenant-general, was placed with the rest of the Barbarians; they had large corselets and cuirasses, and all of them helmets but Cyrus, who placed himself in the centre with six hundred horse, and stood ready for the charge, with his head unarmed: in which manner, they say, it is also customary for the rest of the Persians to expose themselves in a day of action: all the horses in Cyrus's army had both frontlets and breast-plates, and the horsemen Greek swords.

It was now in the middle of the day, and no enemy was yet to be seen; but in the afternoon there appeared a dust like a white cloud which not long after spread itself like a darkness over the plain! when they drew nearer, the brazen armour flashed, and their spears and ranks appeared, having on their left a body of horse armed in white corselets, (said to be commanded

by Tissaphernes) and followed by those with Persian bucklers, besides heavy-armed men with wooden shields, reaching down to their feet, (said to be Egyptians) and other horse, and archers, all which marched according to their respective countries, each nation being drawn up in a solid oblong square ; and before them were disposed, at a considerable distance from one another, chariots armed with scythes fixed aslant at the axle-trees, with others under the body of the chariot, pointing downwards, that so they might cut asunder everything they encountered, by driving them among the ranks of the Greeks to break them ; but it now appeared that Cyrus was greatly mistaken when he exhorted the Greeks to withstand the shouts of the Barbarians ; for they did not come on with shouts, but as silently and quietly as possible, and in an equal and slow march. Here Cyrus riding along the ranks with Pigres the interpreter, and three or four others, commanded Clearchus to bring his men opposite to the centre of the enemy, (because the king was there,) saying, "If we break that, our work is done"; but Clearchus observing their centre, and understanding from Cyrus that the king was beyond the left wing of the Greek army, (for the king was so much superior in number, that, when he stood in the centre of his own army, he was beyond the left wing to that of Cyrus,) Clearchus, I say, would not however be prevailed on to withdraw his right from the river, fearing to be surrounded on both sides ; but answered Cyrus he would take care all should go well.

Now the Barbarians came regularly on ; and the Greek army standing on the same ground, the ranks were formed as the men came up ; in the mean time, Cyrus riding at a small distance before the ranks, surveying both the enemy's army and his own, was observed by Xenophon, an Athenian, who rode up to him, and asked whether he had anything to command : Cyrus, stopping his horse, ordered him to let them all know that the sacrifices and victims promise success.

While he was saying this, upon hearing a horse running through the ranks, he asked him what it meant ? Xenophon answered, that the word was now giving for the second time ; Cyrus, wondering who should give it, asked him what the word was : the other replied, "Jupiter the preserver, and victory"; Cyrus replied, "I accept it, let that be the word," after which he immediately returned to his post, and the two armies being now within three or four stadia of each other, the Greeks sung the pæan, and began to advance against the enemy ; but the motion occasioning a small fluctuation in the line of battle, those who were left behind hastened their march, and at once gave a general shout, as their custom is when they invoke the god of war, and all ran forward, striking their shields with their pikes (as some say) to frighten the enemy's horses : so that, before the Barbarians came within reach of their darts, they turned their horses and fled, but the Greeks pursued them as fast as they could, calling out to one another not to run, but to follow in their ranks ; some of the chariots were borne through their own people without their charioteers, others through the Greeks, some of whom, seeing them coming, divided ; while others, being amazed, like spectators in the Hippodrome, were taken unawares, but even these were reported to have received no harm, neither was there any other Greek hurt in the action, except one upon the left wing, who was said to have been wounded by an arrow.

Cyrus seeing the Greeks victorious on their side, rejoiced in pursuit of the enemy, and was already worshipped as king by those about him ; however,





ARES (LUDOVICI).  
(*The God of War.*)



he was not so far transported as to leave his post and join in the pursuit : but, keeping his six hundred horse in a body, observed the king's motions, well knowing that he was in the centre of the Persian army, for in all Barbarian armies the generals ever place themselves in the centre, looking upon that post as the safest, on each side of which their strength is equally divided ; and if they have occasion to give out any orders, they are received in half the time by the army. The king, therefore, being at that time in the centre of his own battle, was, however, beyond the left wing of Cyrus ; and, when he saw none oppose him in front, nor any motion made to charge the troops that were drawn up before him, he wheeled to the left in order to surround their army ; whereupon Cyrus, fearing he should get behind him, and cut off the Greeks, advanced against the king, and charging with his six hundred horse broke those who were drawn up before him, put the six thousand men to flight, and, as they say, killed Artaxerxes, their commander, with his own hand.

These being broken, and the six hundred belonging to Cyrus dispersed in the pursuit, very few were left about him, and those almost all persons who used to eat at his table : however, upon discovering the king properly attended, and unable to contain himself, immediately cried out, "I see the man !" then ran furiously at him, and, striking him on the breast, wounded him through his corselet, (as Ctesias the physician says, who affirms that he cured the wound,) having, while he was giving the blow, received a wound under the eye, from somebody, who threw a javelin at him with great force ; at the same time, the king and Cyrus engaged hand to hand, and those about them, in defence of each. In this action Ctesias (who was with the king) informs us how many fell on his side ; on the other, Cyrus himself was killed, and eight of his most considerable friends lay dead upon him. When Artapates, who was in the greatest trust with Cyrus of any of his sceptred ministers, saw him fall, they say, he leaped from his horse, and threw himself about him ; when (as some say) the king ordered him to be slain upon the body of Cyrus ; though others assert that, drawing his scimitar, he slew himself ; for he wore a golden scimitar, a chain, bracelets, and other ornaments which are worn by the most considerable Persians ; and was held in great esteem by Cyrus, both for his affection and fidelity.

## HELLENICA. "THE FINAL DEFEAT OF ATHENS."

### BOOK II., CHAP. II.

At Athens, where the Paralus arrived in the night, the calamity was told, and a scream of lamentation ran up from the Piræus through the long walls into the city, one person repeating the news to another ; insomuch that no single soul that night could take any rest, not merely for lamenting those who were lost, but much more for reflecting what themselves in all probability were soon to suffer—the like no doubt as themselves had inflicted upon the Melians, when they had reduced by siege that colony of the Lacedæmonians, on the Istians also, and Scioneans, and Toroneans, and Æginetæ, and many other people in Greece. The next day they summoned a general assembly, in which "it was resolved to barricade all their harbours excepting one, to repair their walls, to fix proper watches, and prepare the city in all respects for a siege." All hands accordingly were immediately at work.

Lysander, who now from the Hellespont was come to Lesbos with two hundred sail, took in and re-settled the cities in that island, and especially

Mitylene. He also sent away to the towns of Thrace ten ships commanded by Eteonicus, who reduced everything there into subjection to the Lacedæmonians. But immediately after the fight at Ægos-potamos all Greece revolted from the Athenians, excepting Samos. At Samos the people, having massacred the nobility, held the city for the Athenians.

In the next place, Lysander sent notice to Agis at Decelea, and to Lacedæmon, that "he is sailing up with two hundred ships." The Lacedæmonians immediately took the field with their own force, as did the rest of the Peloponnesians, except the Argives, upon receiving the order circulated by Pausanias the other king of Lacedæmon. When they were all assembled, he marched away at their head, and encamped them under the walls of Athens,

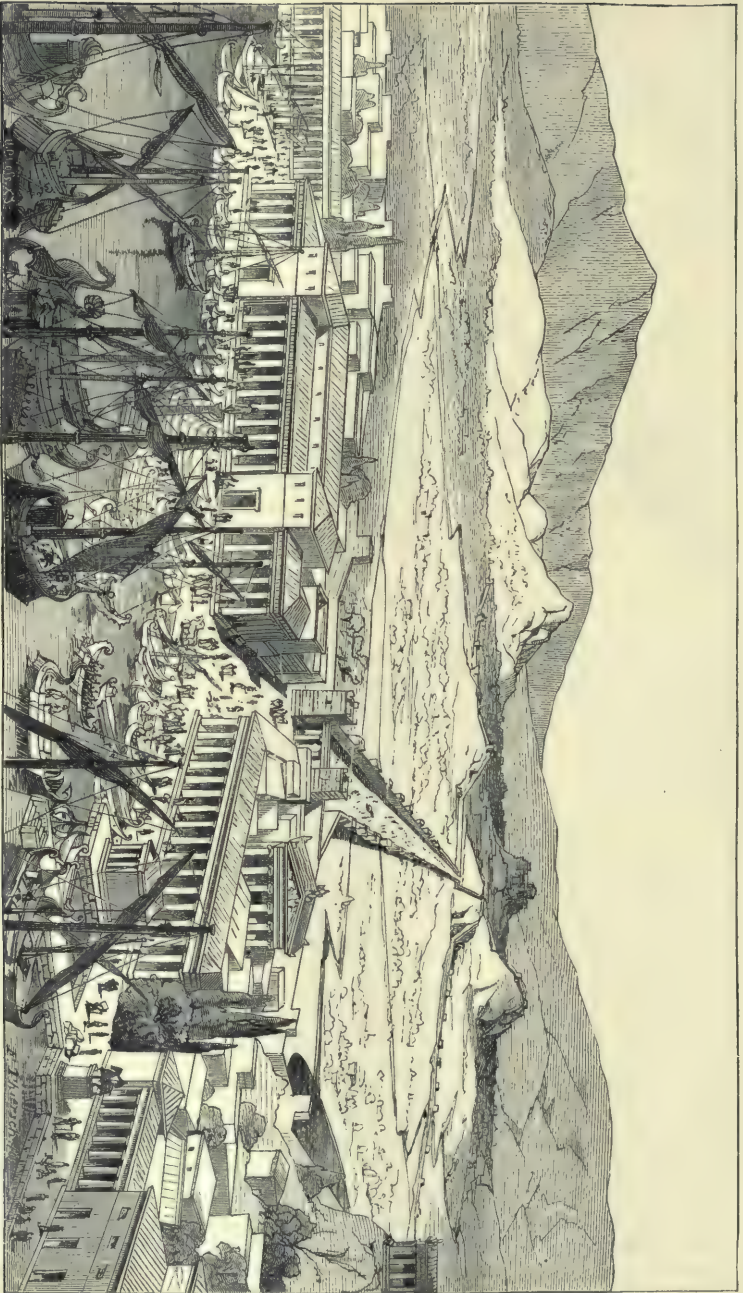


SOLDIERS BUILDING A WALL.

in the place of exercise called the Academy. But Lysander, when come up to Ægina, collected together all the Æginetæ he could possibly find, and replaced them in their city. He did the same to the Melians, and to the other people who formerly had been dispossessed. In the next place, having laid Salamis waste, he stationed himself before the Piræus with a hundred and fifty ships, and prevented all kind of embarkations from entering that harbour.

The Athenians, thus besieged both by land and sea, and destitute of ships, of allies, and of provisions, were miserably perplexed how to act. They judged they had nothing to expect but suffering what without provocation themselves had made others suffer, when they wantonly tyrannized over petty states, and for no other reason in the world than because they were confederate with the state of Lacedæmon. From these considerations, after restoring to their full rights and privileges such as were under the sentence of infamy, they persevered in holding out; and though numbers began to die for want of meat, they would not bear any motion of treating. But when their corn began totally to fail, they sent ambassadors to Agis, offering "to become confederates with the Lacedæmonians, reserving to themselves the long walls and the Piræus," and on these terms would accept an accommodation. Yet Agis ordered them to repair to Lacedæmon, since he himself had no power to treat. When the ambassadors had reported this answer to the Athenians, they ordered them to go to Lacedæmon. But when they were arrived at Selasia on the frontier of Laconia, and the ephori were informed "they were to offer no other proposals than had been made by Agis," they sent them an order "to return to Athens, and when they heartily desired peace, to come again with more favourable instructions." When therefore the ambassadors returned to Athens, and had reported these things





THE PIRÆUS, WITH LONG WALLS.



to the state, a universal despondency ensued; "slavery," they judged, "must unavoidably be their portion; and whilst they were sending another embassy numbers would die of famine." No one durst yet presume to advise the demolition of the walls; since Arcestratus, who had only hinted in the senate that "it would be best for them to make peace on such terms as the Lacedæmonians proposed," had immediately been thrown into prison. But the Lacedæmonians proposed that "each of the long walls should be demolished to the length of ten stadia"; and a decree had been passed that "such a proposal should never be debated."

In this sad situation, Theramenes offered to the general assembly that "if they would let him go to Lysander he could inform them, at his return, whether the Lacedæmonians insisted on the demolition of the walls with a view entirely to enslave them, or by way of security only for their future behaviour." He was ordered to go; and he stayed more than three months with Lysander, waiting till a total want of provision should necessitate the Athenians to agree to any proposal whatever. But on his return in the fourth month, he reported to the general assembly that "Lysander had detained him all this time, and now orders him to go to Lacedæmon, since he had no power to settle the points of accommodation, which could only be done by the ephori." Upon this he was chosen with nine others to go ambassador-plenipotentiary to Lacedæmon. Lysander sent Aristotle, an Athenian, but under sentence of exile, in company with other Lacedæmonians, to the ephori, to assure them that "he had referred Theramenes to them, who alone were empowered to make peace and war." When therefore Theramenes and the other ambassadors were arrived at Sellasia, and were asked—"What instructions they had?"—their answer was,—“They had full powers to make a peace.” Upon this the ephori called them to an audience; and on their arrival at Sparta they summoned an assembly, in which the Corinthians and Thebans distinguished themselves above all others, though several joined in their sentiments. They averred that "the Athenians ought to have no peace at all, but should be utterly destroyed." The Lacedæmonians declared, "they would never enslave a Grecian city that had done such positive service to Greece in the most perilous times." Accordingly they granted a peace on condition "they should demolish the long walls and the Piræus, should deliver up all their ships except twelve, should recall their exiles, should have the same friends and the same foes with the Lacedæmonians, and follow them at command either by land or sea." Theramenes and his colleagues returned to Athens with these conditions of peace. At their entering the city a crowd of people flocked about them, fearing they had been dismissed without anything done: for their present situation would admit of no delay at all, such numbers were perishing by famine. On the day following, the ambassadors reported the terms on which the Lacedæmonians grant a peace. Theramenes was their mouth on this occasion, and assured them "they had no resource left, but to obey the Lacedæmonians and demolish the walls." Some persons spoke against, but a large majority declaring for it, it was resolved "to accept the peace."

In pursuance of this, Lysander stood into the Piræus, and the exiles returned into the city. They demolished the walls with much alacrity, music playing all the time, since they judged this to be the first day that Greece was free.

## BOOK V.—THE ORATORS.

### CHAPTER I.—THE EARLY ORATORS AND ISOCRATES.

I.—The Difference between Ancient and Modern Notions of the Function of Eloquence. Our Theories Mainly Derived from Roman Declamation. The Greek Methods Different. II.—Development of Oratory Among the Greeks. The Influence of the Sophists; the Varying Opinions concerning these Teachers. Their Instruction in Philosophy, Rhetoric, and Physics. III.—The Growth of Dialectic in Sicily. The Early Teachers, and Their Modification of the Greek Prose Style. Its Imitation of Poetical Models, Compared with Euphuism. IV.—Antiphon, Andokides, Lysias; Isocrates and his Artificial Style. His Political Yearnings. Isæos. The Diversity of Athenian Politics Expressed in the Oratory of Isocrates and in his Cunning Art. Its Literary Quality.

#### I.

THE Greek tragedies and histories which we have discussed above make very clear the prominence that oratory held among the Athenians. Yet, as was said before with regard to the speeches of Thucydides, we mean something different from the Greek conception of oratory, when we make mention of modern eloquence. There are signs that oratory is out of favor with us. Just as poets no longer go about reciting their compositions, orators have felt the influence of the printing-press, and for every thousand who stand in a hot hall and hear them, there are ten or a hundred thousand, at least, who read the speeches in the next morning's paper. Hence we notice a change in an orator's method when we compare this with what we know of a century ago. Passages which might give a hearer a momentary thrill are cold and ineffectual in type, and there is a remote, old-fashioned flavor about appeals to passion which are less effectual than reasonable statements and explanation. This change, if it does actually exist, is simply an indication of the decay of the Roman influence and of its giving ground before the sounder spirit of the Greeks. The Roman orators—Cicero, for example—were apt to indulge in violent outbursts of rhetorical passion unknown to their celebrated predecessors, and of a kind that would be impossible in any modern forensic discussion. Instances of this will be found later. Yet in Rome at the Augustan age, the question with regard to the relative merits of the Attic moderation, and of the later Asiatic exaggeration had been decided in the



favor of the first, along with the general interest in Greek things. Even with this decision, however, the Romans were not wholly Hellenized ; not every one who wishes can become a Greek, and it was impossible for the Romans to acquire by effort all that their happier models had by nature. What is the property of only a small class—as was the case with Roman eloquence, that belonged only to a few trained patricians—can never rival that which is a part of the whole life of an eager people. To be sure, modern art and letters rest on a different notion, but it is perhaps safe to say that these owe their greatest glory to the exceptions from the conventional rule. The Roman Senate demanded something very unlike that which was required by the Athenian populace : a quality, namely, that the Romans themselves called *gravitas*, a sort of aristocratic dignity, similar to the remote formality which has buried much of the eloquence of the last century under thick dust. In books of so-called British eloquence, and in the American speeches, familiar to boyhood, this quality is prominent. We all know the majestic style, echoes of it still survive in the speeches uttered on Commencement Day by men who have ceased even to think themselves young ; we all know the florid, pompous phraseology,—not unlike a layer of polished, colored marble—the artificially constructed sentences, the sonorous paragraphs. All these have in their day done good work, but their time is past.

This form of eloquence drew its life not merely from the study and deliberate imitation of Roman models, although their influence, like that of all the branches of Roman literature, was very great, but also in good measure from the reappearance of similar conditions in modern times, one aristocracy being very much like another, all being slaves of similar conventionalities. Eloquence dies hard, but it is none the less mortal ; and its pomp and majesty will disappear just as the distinctive traits of the etiquette, the poetry, and the dress of the last century have disappeared. Rigid formalities of fashion survive only in a few ceremonials of courts ; the artificiality which compelled the poet to call a *gun*, a *deadly tube* (even Wordsworth began with this) has wholly vanished along with the wig which gave the crowning touch to the absence of nature. Similar unrealities are yet found at times in modern oratory, because practically oratory is nearly extinct, and old fashions survive in out-of-the-way corners and very great and rare ceremonies. Now, the men who have anything to say, say it with little conscious striving after eloquence : Prince Bismarck is perhaps a sufficiently prominent example of a powerful and unconventional speaker, and the reader will recall others in England and America who have abandoned the old-fashioned declamation in favor of more intelligible methods. Every change in the direction of simplicity is away



from the Romans and leads infallibly towards the Greeks, not necessarily to copying them, but to the reproduction, with greater or less success, of somewhat similar results, for Greek eloquence may be partly defined as that which is not Roman; that is to say, what is not artificial, not unreal, not perfervid, but what is direct, simple, and genuine.

This definition is certainly more complex than it may at first appear, for real simplicity is only to be acquired with extreme difficulty. A long training is required to enable any one to stand easily on a platform before the eyes of a multitude, and to put an argument in the most convincing way, to make any smooth statement in writing in solitude, is shown by abundant testimony to be at least rare of attainment. Certainly Greek eloquence was not at all of the nature of artless prattle, and the appearance of artlessness was obtained only by the exercise of the most unwearying art. In this respect Greek oratory stands alone and very distinctly different from modern oratory, for at the present time it is regarded much more as a mere tool than seriously as one of the fine arts. Many causes contribute to this result, the principal one of which we may take to be the general indifference of the public to delicacy and subtlety of treatment. In comparison with the Greeks, who were a race of artists, modern people form a race of mechanics who lack the sensitiveness and delicacy of that wonderful nation. Our architecture, our amusements, our pleasures, all prove this statement, which is often flung in our faces by angry teachers. For the Greeks, on the other hand, good speaking was unmistakably a fine art. Its importance, which has been much diminished in these later times, by the fact that we read when they listened, was then very great; public speaking was almost the sole means that any man had for communicating with his fellows. Ambassadors argued before a foreign public, all civic and municipal affairs were transacted by word of mouth, and thus constant practice kept continually polished a taste which was already delicate. Yet, not all the Greeks shared in this gift; it was Athens alone that produced the greatest orators. And even here their high position was not attained at once, without an effort; for, whatever enthusiasts may say, not even at Athens did the impossible happen. The form of government adopted by that city especially encouraged the pursuit of oratory, and its general artistic and literary interests greatly forwarded it; so that, as Cicero says in his *Brutus*, "this art was not the common property of all Greece, but belonged to Athens alone. Who has ever heard of Argive, Corinthian, or Theban orators? And I have never heard of a single orator among the Lacedæmonians." Of the earlier Athenian orators we have at the best only the unliteral reports of Thucydides, and of some not even

this, and apparently what first distinguished them was great ingenuity, boldness of design, and abundant energy, rather than the art which we see gradually growing as time went on. In this respect Pericles, if we follow the opinion of antiquity, excelled his predecessors, and what they praised in him was distinctly the acuteness, fullness, and intelligence of his thoughts. It was after him that the *art* of oratory began to appear.

As Mr. Jebb says in his *Attic Orators*, "the intellectual turning-point came when poetry ceased to have a sway of which the exclusiveness rested on the presumption that no thought can be expressed artistically which is not expressed metrically." The rise of prose occurred with the general awakening of manifold intellectual interest which accompanied the Persian wars. Then the Greek mind broke away from its earlier mediævalism with the consciousness of the security of its national existence against barbarian force. Athens led in the advance and speedily acquired all that was best in the new spirit. Fortunately, as an Ionian city, it possessed the rich intellectual qualities of that brilliant race, already renowned in the history of culture, and its hospitality to intellectual interests attracted leading men from every quarter where the Greek tongue was spoken. It will be noticed that many came from other cities, but it was Athens that they made their adopted home.

## II.

The new education busied itself particularly with artistic prose, and the most important manifestation of this novelty was in the art of speaking. Those who taught it were known as Sophists, teachers of *sophia*, wisdom, and their subsequent influence on Greek culture can hardly be overrated. Yet that it has been overrated, many would be willing to affirm, for besides teaching the Greeks how to argue, they left their memory as a subject for the unending discussion of posterity. There are men who find the Sophists a sufficient cause for the future changes of Greece, and behold in them and their teachings a satisfactory explanation for the enfeeblement of private and public virtue. If this view is the correct one, the Sophist certainly managed to waste one of the most magnificent opportunities that teachers ever enjoyed. It is hard to suppose that they deliberately decided to overthrow the welfare of the state, and if we examine the charges brought against them, it is not easy to see how their methods could have produced such miserable consequences. The Sophists were, in fact, men who brought to an eager public new information regarding science, and who pretended to train young men to think, speak, and act as became Athenian



citizens. The principal accusation made against them is that they imparted their knowledge for hire. Certainly the world has seen darker crimes than this, and it certainly savors of hypocrisy for one who teaches or writes in order to support himself to denounce as a crime what he knows is only legitimate prudence. That these men taught only quibbles it is impossible to suppose; even if they had done so, and the whole Athenian public had so far lost the control of their intelligence which is commonly adjudged to have been at least respectable, it is a wide leap to affirming that these caused the ruin of the state; they may well, however, have caused the ruin of the quibblers.

In fact, however, it is unfair to throw the blame for the subsequent loss of Athenian superiority on any one class of the citizens, and especially to those whose aim it undoubtedly was to prepare men for their most important duties. Even if they were unwise in their methods, it is hard to blame the excellence of their intentions, for their design was to teach their pupils the proper conduct of political life. For this nothing was more important than the power of discussing the various questions that came up for decision; the citizens possessed immediate control of public affairs, and nothing was more desirable than that questions should be presented to them lucidly and eloquently. Since it was necessary that every course of action should be presented to the citizens for their judgment, it is evident that men would naturally seek the best means of commending such propositions as they thought wise with all the aid that eloquence could inspire. No other course was possible; hence condemnation is idle, for the inevitable deserves neither praise nor blame. Doubtless the power of eloquence was exaggerated by its professors, who saw in the few branches of the education that they taught all the good that training can give, but while its limitations are very clear to us, we must remember how few at that time were the subjects in which instruction could be given, and thus understand the excessive importance ascribed to rhetoric. It may serve to remind us of what we should always bear in mind, the almost exclusively rhetorical character of Greek literature.

A comparison of the intellectual excitement of the period with that which accompanied the revival of letters in modern days may not be wholly unprofitable, in spite of the obvious danger of reading into one of the parts of the comparison what really belongs only to the other. It is possible to evade this peril by noticing simply one important agreement, and that is the effort made at both epochs to attain a new and impressive method of expression. At the Renaissance this movement was most marked, and the whole growth of modern literature as



an art dates from the time when classic literature was taken as the sole model. In a similar way the upheaval of Greece after the Persian wars was accompanied by an endeavor to acquire a new mode of utterance, and it was the Sophists, with their rare graces, who held the place afterward occupied by the Humanists. They brought rule and lesson into a field that had previously been comparatively uncultivated, and substituted formality in the place of freedom or lawlessness. The command of style became necessary for every writer as the token of his allegiance to the new spirit, and in both cases a complicated method of utterance succeeded to a simple one, and men's attention was mainly directed rather to how a thing was said than to what was said.

To call the resemblance a mere chance coincidence is unwise ; it is certainly more discreet to find the two sets of facts the results of similar causes, and to see that a general necessity of improving expression is an essential part of intellectual change. If the new authority of the Sophists had only this ground, they deserve to be acquitted of causing the subsequent overthrow of Greek freedom. Elegance of style is not so efficacious as that charge would imply, and in fact it is in this case nothing more than a sign of great upheaval, when every one's aim was to secure a form of utterance that should match the new dignity and scope of human thought. It was not the only time in the history of the world that the form has seemed most essential, or that undue blame has followed extravagant praise.

Every important change in education is sure of opposition from conservatives. The decay of scholasticism appeared a serious blow in the eyes of many who regarded it as the fountain of wisdom, and even now there are very many teachers of high repute who look upon any tendency in favor of scientific instruction as but pernicious degradation of youthful intelligence. The sneer of Aristophanes with regard to the length of a flea's jump still finds an echo in the hearts of college presidents who would like to confine modern thought in the narrow bounds that were deemed sufficient before science existed ; and from their denunciations enough could be gathered to prove that science was as dangerous a foe to modern progress as Sophistics was ever held to be to the ancient. Yet that the statements of the Sophists were always wise is as unlikely as that all modern scientific hypotheses are infallibly accurate. Socrates himself denounced the study of physics as a wicked waste of opportunity in comparison with the investigation of ethical questions, and in the early applications of logic and the laws of probability we find much that the world properly regards as childish quibbling. That it was childish is very true and of course inevitable, for those who are laying the foundations of a new science are

exactly in the condition of children beginning their studies. The only unpardonable childishness is the habit, natural though it be, of laughing at earlier blunders.

Of the philosophical and physical innovations there will be occasion to speak later; in oratory we fail to find anything which the world has agreed to call degeneracy. The new instruction in this old art came broadly from two quarters—from Ionian Hellas a more general culture; and from Sicily, dialectic training. From wherever they came, they were welcomed most warmly; the arrival in any city of one of the great Sophists was regarded as an occasion of special rejoicing, and they had abundant opportunity for indulging in their favorite crime of charging for their instruction. The names of the first Sophists have been handed down to us along with many tributes of gratitude for their services in behalf of culture. Among the earliest of these was Protagoras of Abdera, who came to Athens when about forty years old, in the year 444 B.C., and gave instruction in the proper use of language, and also in the conduct of an argument. Hippias of Elis taught many subjects of general interest, physics, astronomy, and learned investigations of many kinds, touching in their turn upon questions of grammar and prosody. Prodicus of Keos investigated the exact meanings of words with a care previously unknown. What we know of the rest of his work is certainly not of an inflammatory or dangerous nature; the choice of Hercules between vice and virtue is quoted by Xenophon in his *Memorabilia* as an allegory narrated by Prodicus. Euripides and Isocrates are said to have been pupils of his.

### III.

In Sicily the art of dialectic had grown up under congenial conditions. We have seen how much comedy drew from that island; and the same quick-witted vivacity that gave life to that amusement made itself felt in the early growth of serious prose. Syracuse and Athens had passed through very similar political experiences; both cities had seen the rule of an aristocracy, succeeded by a tyranny, which was itself replaced by a democracy. In the western city, as we have seen, the tyrants had encouraged literature, and the resemblance of the tastes of its inhabitants to those of the Athenians was often noted by ancient writers. The material prosperity and equivalent political position of both cities do in fact almost imply a wider similarity. The active trade of Sicily and the confusion that followed the dynastic changes gave an opportunity for rhetorical development which soon made its way to Athens. The establishment of the art of rhetoric is ascribed to Corax of Syracuse, who prepared a set of rules for forensic speak-



ing, to which is due the further credit of being the first theoretical Greek book on any branch of art. Of its contents it is only known that it held rules for the division of a speech into five parts: the introduction, narrative, arguments, subsidiary remarks, and peroration. The introduction was to contain such remarks as should serve to put the listeners in good humor, and among the arguments that of general probability was commended. Thus, if a weak man is accused of an assault, he can point out the obvious unlikelihood; while a strong man, in such a case, would point out the unlikelihood of his committing the offense when the presumption against him was so strong. We are evidently studying the infancy of the art.

Among his pupils were Tisias and Empedocles, both of whom acquired fame as orators and teachers of oratory, but the most celebrated was Gorgias, born about 485 B.C., at Leontini, in Sicily. He was chosen by his fellow-townsmen to head an embassy that was sent to Athens in 427 B.C., to ask aid in their war with Syracuse. The impression that he made was very great; for he was a master of a form of prose that was new to their ears. The possession of a certain definite style was the most marked thing in the rhetoric of Gorgias; everything else he appears to have disregarded, but to Greek prose he gave a distinctive form. Only a fragment of this is left, but it is enough, when added to the descriptions of his traits that are to be found in later writers, to make it clear that he modelled his prose upon the current style of poetry, as Aristotle said in his *Rhetoric*. He used poetical words; he formed compounds with all the freedom of a lyric or dithyrambic poet, and, more than this, he gave his sentences a distinct rhythmical form, with the different clauses balancing one another, so that the whole effect upon the hearer was of a new and delightful art, not verse, and still less the language of common life. His devices were most subtle: sentences were made of equal length, they were given a similar form, the same sounds were echoed in other words at the end or turning-point of the corresponding phrases, and at once Greek prose received new life. How curiously this new style matched the poetry cannot of course be made clear in any translation; but we can readily infer its probability from a glance at English prose. Not only, as the late Mark Pattison has pointed out, is the stanza, as employed by Spenser, the analogue of the prose sentence of Hooker, Jeremy Taylor, or Milton, but the brief couplet of Pope corresponds to the neat, compact prose sentences of his contemporaries. Going further back to the early appearance of artistic prose among the Elizabethan Euphuists, we may describe it as something not wholly unlike the style of Gorgias, infinitely cruder and harsher, yet distinguished by the same very distinct cadences and balancing, with



alliteration marking the time as distinctly as the beat of the foot. Its artifices corresponded closely to those common in the verse of the period with its abundant antitheses and profuse alliteration: such, for example, as are to be found in Surrey's Description of Spring:

"The soote season, that bud and bloom furth brings,  
 With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale,  
 The nightingale with feathers new she sings;  
 The turtle to her mate hath told her tale.  
 Summer is come, for every spray now springs,  
 The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;  
 The buck in brake his winter coat he flings;  
 The fishes flete with new-repaired scale;  
 The adder all her slough away she slings;  
 The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale;" etc.

Awkward and numb as these lines are with their clumsy imitation of Petrarch's grace, it is yet possible to trace some of the qualities of what, as Euphuism, Marianism, or Gongorism, prevailed over the whole of Europe, in these more than obvious alliterations. Not all its characteristics are to be found in these few lines, for Euphuism was marked by much more copious antithesis, and perpetual balancing of phrases, assonances, and other delights of the ear; it was with those aids that the early formal prose endeavored to make its way as a companion of the carefully constructed verse which abounded with the artificial charms of all mediæval art. In Petrarch we find many instances of his imitation of the devices of the Provençal poets, and what he did became a model for succeeding writers of verse. In order to compete with this formidable rival, prose had to show that it was no less rich in artifice,—hence we find it arraying itself with all sorts of fantastic trickeries and refinements. These it borrowed from many diverse sources, of which this mediæval alliteration was but one; the cunning inventions of Spanish writers were of especial influence in the formation of Euphuism, but in all the forms that the single spirit assumed we may recognize the attempt to make a prose corresponding to the verse, and to let a careful construction closely imitate the effect of rhyme. In Euphuism this result was attained by curious employment of antithesis and balance of phrases, as in these lines: "And if I were as able to perswade thee to patience, as thou wert desirous to exhort me to pietie, or as wise to comfort thee in thine age, as thou willing to instruct me in my youth? thou shouldst now with lesse grieve endure thy late losse, and with little care leade thy aged life. Thou weepest for the death of thy daughter, and I laugh at the folly of the father, for greater varietie is there in the minde of the mourner, than bitterness in the death of the deceased," etc., etc. This bears a curious resemblance to the few bits that we have left of the writing of Gorgias,

and it is interesting to notice that in both ancient and modern times formal prose began with arts not unlike those that ruled the poetry. The resemblance between the Sicilian sophist and Lily is very close: similar conditions produced similar results.

It is to be remembered, too, that the introduction of the Egyptian papyrus furnished writers with a cheap and convenient material for the



BOOKCASE AND WRITING MATERIALS.

reception and preservation of writing, and that thus an opportunity was offered for a form of literature that did not depend on the memory for preservation and transmission. We are told that Polycrates of Samos and Peisistratus of Athens were the first to form libraries, but it is probable that these collections were long beyond the means of private citizens, because it is not till much later that we hear of the

books gathered by Euripides. Only then, doubtless, had they become cheap enough for more modest purses, and a reference of Aristophanes in the *Frogs* indicates an abundance of books towards the end of the Peloponnesian war.

#### IV.

In Greece the polish that was given to prose, and that made itself felt immediately in the oratory, was much admired, and it spread rapidly among those who were interested in the new learning. We find Plato, when he introduced Agathon, the tragedian, into his *Symposium*, lets him talk quite in the manner of Gorgias; and we hear that the rhetorician's pupils, Polus and Alcidamas, outdid their master in affectation and extravagant refinement. The first of the orators to combine the recently introduced rhetoric with the accustomed eloquence was Antiphon, in the deme of Rhamnus in Attica, who was born about 480 B.C., who was the first in time of the ten great Attic orators. Thucydides in his history speaks of him in terms of warm praise as "a man second to none of the Athenians of his day in respect of virtue, who had proved himself most able to devise measures and to express his views; and who, though he did not come forward in the assembly of the people, nor, when he could help it, in any other scene of public debate, but was eyed with suspicion by the populace on account of his reputation for cleverness, yet was most competent of all to help those engaged in a controversy, whether in a court of justice or before a popular assembly. And he, too, when the Four Hundred had fallen, and was ill-treated, seems to me to have made the best defense of all men up to my time, when tried for his life on the charge of having aided in establishing this government." His speech, however, did not save him, and in 411 B.C. he was put to death, his property was confiscated, and his descendants were deprived of citizenship. Unfortunately, this speech which Thucydides praises so highly has not come down to us, yet we have fifteen orations that have been ascribed to him; three of which deal with actual legal cases, while the others are but rhetorical exercises concerning imaginary law-suits. Of the three which we call the sincere ones, it is to be remembered that they were composed for the use of other people, a practice which may be regarded as equivalent to the modern custom of employing a lawyer for the defense of the citizen's legal rights. It is easy to imagine the surprise with which the antagonist who trusted to his own powers must have heard his antagonist reciting an ingenious oration composed by this master of the art. The success of this innovation may be readily conjectured, and it is proved by the existence of what may be



called the fictitious orations that were designed for the training of pupils. It is known that Antiphon gave instruction in rhetoric, and it was doubtless for the use of his pupils that he prepared a manual of the art. These speeches, written for practice after the fashion set by Protagoras and Gorgias, were most ingenious expositions of opposing arguments, and by the fact that they appeared as tetralogies, with two speeches on each side, preserved them from becoming mere orations for the demolition of men of straw. Antiphon was always arguing against a good pleader. All the orations, the real as well as the fictitious ones, deal with murder-cases. Not all the arguments employed would be of weight in a modern court-room, but what determines the value of an argument is its suitability to the tribunal sitting in judgment, and at Athens at this time distinctions were drawn between different kinds of guilt after a fashion now extinct. The style of Antiphon is full of interest, and in some respects it bears a likeness to that of Thucydides. The two men are the most important representatives of what is called the austere style, which was distinguished from the smooth and middle styles, represented by Isocrates and Demosthenes, respectively, which were the divisions of the new rhetoric. The likeness between the famous historian and the orator lies, for one thing, in a similar effort to give adequate expression to subtle thought. Thucydides frequently employs the persistent antithesis that we find in Antiphon, the continual subtle division of a thought into all its meanings and connotations, which is what Antiphon also employs, and both have a rugged, sturdy quality that shows that they were exposed to the same influences. Both exhibit similar restrained vehemence, and it is in this dignity and self-control that Antiphon, when we compare him with the later orators, holds to them a position not unlike that which Æschylus holds in relation to his successors.

Of Andocides, the next in the list of ten, there is less to be said, for his importance is greater to history than to the study of literature. He was curiously connected with the mutilation of the *Hermes*, an event that agitated Athens just before the sailing of the Sicilian expedition. For guilt in this affair, which, in connection with the profanation of the Eleusinian mysteries, had all the horror of a Nihilistic outbreak, he was compelled to leave Athens. He supported himself during his banishment by carrying on business, and at length returned under a general amnesty. He appears to have held positions of importance, for he was sent to Sparta to negotiate concerning peace. His subsequent career is uncertain. One story says that he was again banished, which would give roundness to the general melancholy of his career, but this is mercifully doubted. But three speeches of his

are left : one with regard to this very peace, which is wise and sensible. Another, on his return, was intended to aid him in procuring the removal of certain disabilities under which he lay. The third, on the Mysteries, relates to the accusation brought against him, of profaning those holy rites. A fourth, against Alcibiades, is regarded as ungeniue. The speeches ascribed to him are smooth and simple, with no excess of ornament or of novelty. He is not a man who instinctively occurs to the mind of any one who is thinking of the masters of oratory.

Lysias was a man of a different sort, whose influence on oratory was very great. When poetry and sculpture were fading away with the overthrow of the Athenian power, the mastery of prose took their place and reached its highest development. To the attainment of this result Lysias contributed in a very marked degree. The somewhat formal style of the early oratory was modified by him into a vivid, simpler picturesqueness that bore closer resemblance to the language of common speech. In his hands oratory ceased to be something remote and solemn, it became part of human life, and it is perhaps instructive to notice that it lost none of its power by this change.

The exact date of the birth of Lysias is uncertain ; it was probably about the year 459 B.C. He was the son of Cephalos, a Syracusan who settled at Athens on the invitation of Pericles, and here Lysias was born. When fifteen years old, he went to Thurii, in Magna Græcia, with his eldest brother, and there it is said that he studied rhetoric under Tisias, already mentioned as the pupil of Corax. When the Athenian expedition set out against Sicily, he with others was charged with Atticising, and compelled to return to Athens. This was in 412 B.C. The next few years he passed there without interruption, possibly continuing his rhetorical studies and composing some of the artificial pieces included among his works ; in 404 B.C., however, his wealth brought him under the ill-will of the Thirty, he was robbed of his property, and with difficulty escaped secretly to Megara. His brother was put to death. Lysias remained in exile for about a year, until the overthrow of the Thirty, when he returned to Athens, and was granted citizenship there. From this time, 403 B.C., until 380, he was busily employed as a writer of speeches for the use of others in the courts of law. Of these he is said to have composed no less than two hundred, more than twice the number ascribed to any other Attic orator. A story runs that he composed a defense for Socrates at his trial in 399 B.C., but that the philosopher declined to use it. The only one that he wrote for his own use was the oration against Eratosthenes, one of the detested Thirty Tyrants and the murderer of his brother Polemarchus. This is



one of the great speeches of antiquity, not only for the calm earnestness with which Lysias recites his own personal grievances against a cruel despot, when he holds his hand and lets the simplest narration of facts fill the hearer with indignation, and then for the seriousness and warmth of his denunciation of a political system under which such injustice was possible. Here are his concluding words, appealing first to those who had remained at Athens under the oligarchy, and then to the democratic exiles who had held the Peiræus:

I wish, before I go down, to recall a few things to the recollection of both parties, the party of the town and the party of the Peiræus; in order that, in passing sentence, you may have before you as warnings the calamities which have come upon you through these men.

And you, first, of the town — reflect that under their iron rule you were forced to wage with brothers, with sons, with citizens a war of such a sort that, having been vanquished, you are the equals of the conquerors, whereas, had you conquered, you would have been the slaves of the tyrants. They would have gained wealth for their own houses from the administration; you have impoverished yours in the war with one another; for they did not deign that you should thrive along with them, though they forced you to become odious in their company; such being their consummate arrogance that, instead of seeking to win your loyalty by giving you partnership in their prizes, they fancied themselves friendly if they allowed you a share in their dishonours. Now, therefore, that you are in security, take vengeance to the utmost of your power both for yourselves and for the men of the Peiræus; reflecting that these men, villains that they are, were your masters, but that now good men are your fellow-citizens,—your fellow-soldiers against the enemy, your fellow-counsellors in the interest of the state; remembering, too, those allies whom these men posted on the Acropolis as sentinels over their despotism and your servitude. To you—though much more might be said—I say this only.

But you of the Peiræus—think, in the first place, of your arms—think how, after fighting many a battle on foreign soil, you were stripped of those arms, not by the enemy, but by these men in time of peace; think, next, how you were warned by public criers from the city bequeathed to you by your fathers, and how your surrender was demanded of the cities in which you were exiles. Resent these things as you resented them in banishment; and recollect, at the same time, the other evils that you have suffered at their hands;—how some were snatched out of the market-place or from temples and put to a violent death; how others were torn from children, parents, or wife, and forced to become their own murderers, nor allowed the common decencies of burial, by men who believed their own empire to be surer than the vengeance from on high.

And you, the remnant who escaped death, after perils in many places, after wanderings to many cities and expulsion from all, beggared of the necessities of life, parted from children, left in a fatherland which was hostile or in the land of strangers, came through many obstacles to the Peiræus. Dangers many and great confronted you; but you proved yourselves brave men; you freed some, you restored others to their country.

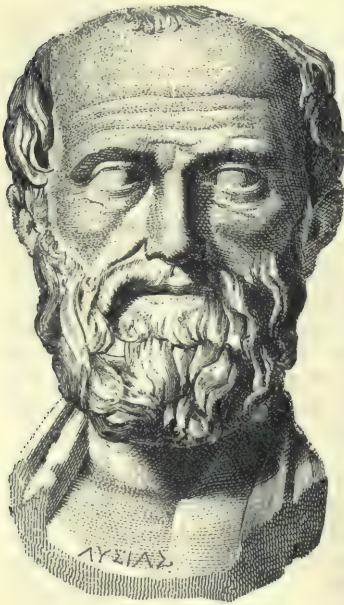
Had you been unfortunate and missed those aims, you yourselves would now be exiles, in fear of suffering what you suffered before. Owing to the



character of these men, neither temples nor altars, which even in the sight of evil-doers have a protecting virtue, would have availed you against wrong ; — while those of your children who are here would have been enduring the outrages of these men, and those who are in a foreign land, in the absence of all succour, would, for the smallest debt, have been enslaved.

I do not wish, however, to speak of what might have been, seeing that what these men have done is beyond my power to tell; and indeed it is a task not for one accuser or for two, but for a host.

Yet is my indignation perfect for the temples which these men bartered away or defiled by entering them; for the city which they humbled; for the arsenals which they dismantled; for the dead, whom you, since you could not rescue them alive, must vindicate in their death. And I think that they are listening to us, and will be aware of you when you give your verdict, deeming that such as absolve these men have passed sentence upon *them*, and that such as exact retribution from these have taken vengeance in *their* names.



LYSIAS.

I will cease accusing. You have heard, seen, suffered : you have them : judge.

In this extract, as in almost all of the thirty-four speeches that have come down to us either complete or in large fragments, it is easy to notice the absence of exaggeration which forms one of the most characteristic traits of Lysias. Instead of exaggerating he restrains himself, and by the delicacy of his touch he won great praise from the critics of both Greece and Rome. Cicero frequently speaks of him, and always with the highest praise. He commends his elegance and refinement, and yet without denying him vigor; he says that while it is doubtful whether Lysias could ever have reached the heights of

Demosthenes, he was almost a second Demosthenes, or, what is the same thing, almost a perfect orator. All who mention him call especial attention to the marvelous grace and accuracy of his style, a point concerning which it is not easy for us to form an independent opinion. Yet we may see that his language was plain and eminently persuasive, that he helped to save oratory from sinking beneath excess of ornament and convention, and that his exquisite taste hastened the development of the purest eloquence.

His later speeches were mostly written for others, who were contestants in public or private law-suits, and in them we notice the same

sober but convincing art. Fragments of two public orations remain bearing his name, one uttered at the Olympic festival in 388 B.C.; the other is a funeral oration over Athenians who had been sent to support Corinth, but its genuineness is doubted. Ancient critics were cooler in their praise of the set orations of Lysias.

In the *Phædrus* of Plato we find Socrates ridiculing what pretends to be an extract from one of the minor works of Lysias, the genuineness of which is doubted by many competent authorities, and expressing some contempt for the art of that rhetorician, whom he places much lower than Isocrates, a young follower of Socrates, for whose future the highest hopes are expressed. The writing of Lysias that is here laughed at is a discussion on love, and is certainly not a fair representative of his best work, and although Socrates applauds his polish and clearness, he is amply justified in affirming that

“Nobler far is the serious pursuit of the dialectician, who finds a congenial soil, and there with knowledge engrafts and sows words which are able to help themselves and him who planted them, and are not unfruitful, but have in them seeds which may bear fruit in other natures nurtured in other ways — making the seed everlasting, and the possessors happy to the utmost extent of human happiness.”

To be sure, Socrates says that oratory depends much more on the natural genius of the speaker than on any rules, yet he blames Lysias for seeming to write off freely just what came into his head.

If Plato blamed Lysias justly for his early writings, he was but a false prophet concerning Isocrates, for however full of promise that orator may have appeared in his youth, in his later years he certainly did not incline in the direction of greater naturalness. He was born in 436 B.C., more than twenty years after Lysias, at Athens; his philosophical studies, by which apparently Socrates was flattered, did not prevent him from making eloquence the chief occupation of his life. He helped to give it, however, a new direction toward questions of statesmanship, instead of confining it, as his predecessors had been inclined to do, to the narrower limits of the courts. Lysias had, however, preceded him in a fashion already established by the detested Sophists, who used to take advantage of the assemblage of citizens at the great games from all quarters of Greece, to deliver orations which should illustrate the excellence of the speakers in their favorite art, as well as convey sound political instruction. Of Gorgias we are told that

“His speech at Olympia dealt with the largest of political questions. Seeing Greece torn by faction, he became a counsellor of concord, seeking to turn the Greeks against the barbarians, and advising them to take for the prizes of their arms not each other's cities, but the land of the barbarians.”



He found admirers, too, for at Delphi there stood his golden statue in the temple where he had "thundered his Pythian speech from the altar." Hippias had also spoken at Olympia. When Lysias pronounced his oration, he gave sound advice to his listeners, urging them to unite against the dangers that threatened them from the East and from Sicily, and it was to enforce the same wise lesson that Isocrates pronounced his famous Panegyric in 380 B.C. That the oration was actually delivered by Isocrates is more than doubtful, because lack of voice and a certain shyness prevented him from speaking in public, but the



ISOCRATES.

speech was published as a sort of political pamphlet to discuss the existing state of affairs. He begins by recommending Athens and Sparta to set aside their long-lived jealousies, and although Sparta is at present the more powerful, yet some compromise is advisable in view of the historical glory of its rival; the two united should begin a war against Persia, their old and relentless foe. His eloquence failed, however, to accomplish any practical result; the future victories of Greece were wrought by the action of the keen intelligence of that country, not by force of arms. As Isocrates himself said in this oration:

"Athens has so distanced the world in power of thought and speech that her disciples have become the teachers of all other men. She has brought it to pass that the name of Greece should be

thought no longer a matter of race but a matter of intelligence; and should be given to the participators in our culture rather than to the sharers of our common origin."

The hopes which Isocrates expressed in this speech were not daunted by failure. For nearly forty years he sought for a leader who should guide Greece to victory, and he continually urged this remedy for her woes. He brought to the aid of his purpose a wonderful mastery of the oratorical art. His ideas, if few, were distinct, and he expressed them with wonderful skill. No one of the great orators was more successful in weaving a web of artificial grace, in achieving the mastery of a flawless style. As we have seen, he was regarded as the leading representative of what was called the middle style, which was character-



ized by keen consciousness of the value of rhythm and harmony. He thus welded the earlier efforts of Gorgias and men like him with the work of the orators who had spoken before him. Yet while successful in what he aimed at, the result is cloying ; one too often inclines to notice his workmanship instead of being led by it insensibly to adherence to what he says, and it becomes in time a fatal objection to an artificial method, so that the reader admires the method rather than the work done. The result is that Isocrates is marking time, with astounding accuracy, to be sure, yet without advancing, while the other orators are marching forward. Yet this remark, though it applies to the final value of Isocrates as a man, in no way affects the importance of the final polish that he gave to Greek prose. He completed its gradual growth toward subtlety and refinement, leaving it a perfect instrument. Indirectly, too, these qualities of his style acted on Latin prose, and later his influence worked on modern prose, for at the time of the Renaissance, when men were impatient to find a new method of expression to take the place of the aridities of mediævalism, Isocrates was much read—fortunately for himself, his Greek was readily intelligible—and found admirers and imitators among men hungry for beauty and artificiality.

It was not by his orations alone that Isocrates established his authority ; after writing speeches for the law courts for a few years, he abandoned that means of support, for which he ever after expressed considerable contempt, and founded a school for rhetorical and political instruction. This proved a great success ; he numbered among his pupils many illustrious names, and doubtless his instruction was one of the most important intellectual inspirations of the time. Meanwhile he composed his orations, in which he was never tired of urging the need of Greek unity ; he commended the old democracy of Solon and the pristine virtue of that remote time, but such advice was of course without effect. Even eloquence could not bring back the days of Grecian glory. Isocrates lived until his ninety-eighth year, 388 B.C., and the story ran that on hearing the melancholy news of the defeat of the Greeks by Philip at Chæroneia, he starved himself to death. Milton, it will be remembered, in his sonnet to the Lady Margaret Ley, says :

“ as that dishonest victory  
At Chæroneia, fatal to liberty,  
Killed with report that old man eloquent.”

But this picturesque anecdote is generally doubted, for the battle was in fact the fulfillment of the aged orator's hopes that Greece should find a leader against Persia, and there survives a letter of his in which he expresses his content with the altered condition of affairs.

As has been already indicated, the orations of Isocrates deal with important questions of statesmanship, although with but little novelty in his advice; what never fails him is the desire for artistic perfection. Out of the genuine works of his which were known to antiquity, twenty-one speeches and nine letters have come down to us, very nearly all. Fifteen of these discourses were composed for readers, and were of the nature of political pamphlets in oratorical form, like the *Panegyrikos* mentioned above; this and two others, the *Areopagitikos* and the *Panathenaïkos*, are the most famous. In the *Areopagitikos* he pleads in defense of the old democracy when license was not confounded with freedom; in the *Panathenaic* oration he defends himself from some of the accusations that "vulgar Sophists" had brought against him, and celebrates at some length the glory of Athens. It is certainly a marvelous production for a man over ninety years old, and is exceptional for the plainness of its style. Curious are the *Busiris* and the *Encomium on Helen* as examples of his purely perfunctory treatment of set subjects, like the exercises of the Sophists. By the side of these efforts he regarded writers of speeches for the courts, doll-makers in comparison with Pheidias, but possibly even the doll-makers would not have seen Athens overthrown with half the complacency of this artist in words, who survives after all simply as an accomplished rhetorician.

What the reader will have noticed is the striking growth of artificial oratory among the Athenians during this period; and the spread of this custom marks a wide contrast with the earlier literary sincerity. Doubtless the poets had sung imaginary woes with more attention to the form of expression than to the reality of their words, but in what has reached us we are struck by the apparent reality of the verse. From this time on we shall have frequent occasion to observe the growth of a quality in literature that is very remote from life. It is hard, however, to see how this unreality was to be avoided. Readiness and smoothness of speech were not to be acquired without practice, and it was only on imaginary cases that this could be had. Obviously men would be averse to intrusting the defense of their lives or their property to inexperienced advocates, and only by showing how well they could defend men of straw, could orators be chosen to defend men of flesh and blood. Teachers, too, had to give proof of the excellence of their method; it was incumbent upon them to show how harmonious and rhythmical were the sentences that they could form, and as specimens of their skill they spoke on subjects that could offend no one. When it is remembered that the main work of the advocates was preparing speeches for the use of other people, it becomes evident that the capacity to assume emotions was a most desirable



quality, so that he who was most eloquent about acknowledged trifles showed a superiority to those who betrayed less quick sympathy by responding only to more serious demands.

The result is obvious: on one side, oratory improved from the constant practice which it received, but, on the other, there is to be noticed a distinct sacrifice of matter to form, a continual disposition to regard literature as an art, as something foreign to real life. Eloquence, after attaining its greatest height when employed by Demosthenes, sank into an elegant accomplishment, and being the principal object of intellectual interest, when the political life of Greece died it became a mere amusement, a sort of intellectual jugglery. Already in Isocrates we see eloquence dangerously near this condition, and the exercise of ingenuity and cleverness resting on a slender basis, for instead of being one flower of education, it was almost the whole of education for this race. In him we see a mind apparently almost equally divided about the relative importance of two members of a well-balanced period, and the proper course of statesmanship, and he shows in the bud the future development of all this oratory into a splitting of straws and the most approved form of literary trifling. Yet Isocrates must not bear too much odium for belonging to the losing side. That test would condemn Aristophanes, and Demosthenes himself would have to be denied our admiration if that were to be given only to success. Nothing is more unwise than the danger which besets an advocate of letting respect for one set of qualities blind him to another, and nothing is more common. Every one of the tragedians has suffered from it in turn, and it would be well to preserve the orators from a like fate, which after all gives us more insight into their commentators than into the men whom they may happen to discuss.

The political advice that Isocrates gave was something that recommended itself to him as one who observed the incompetence of Sparta; all his keen intellectual sympathies inclined him to set a high store on Athens, and he continually strove to establish a pan-Hellenic union in which that city should renew its former prominence. He endeavored to unite Greece against a common foe, and certainly he showed insight in detecting the weakness of Persia. By attacking that country he hoped that all the existing and destructive intestine jealousies might be welded into a harmonious spirit of conquest, and that Greece might become a mighty unit. So far his counsel was wise. The magnificent strength of Greece, as shown in its earlier wars with Persia, warranted him in making this effort, which was made only more desirable by the present distracted state of the country. What he failed to detect was the dangers threatening from the growth of the Macedonian power. Indeed, he was unconsciously a powerful ally of Philip; with no



knowledge of what he was doing, like the great section of the Athenian populace whose mouthpiece he was, he was preparing for the Macedonian supremacy when he urged his fellow-citizens not to strive for temporal power, but to content themselves with glory from the past and undeniable intellectual ascendancy in the future. He thus indicated what was to be the position of Athens in the period then opening, the spirit that survived when the material power of that city was gone, but its mind remained and controlled later civilizations. This disposition to lay aside all claim to temporal power is most clearly marked in the letter of Isocrates to Philip after the peace of 346 B.C., when that king had secured his position as champion of the Amphictyonic assembly. Here the orator urges Philip to put himself at the head of united Greece and to undertake his old hobby, namely, to overthrow the Persian empire and free the Asiatic Greeks. He accepts without a murmur the degradation of his country.

As might be expected, this resignation of ancient glory was counterbalanced by a keen love of the undoubted literary superiority of Greece, and he was not unaware of the extent to which he had helped to further this. It was not, however, a single man whom we are studying, but one who expresses a momentous change in the Athenian people. The delight in letters that we observe in him was something more than a personal quality; it is not a mere vain old man whom we have before us, eloquent and conscious of his eloquence, with certain limited notions of political wisdom, but rather a picture of a large part of his contemporaries; that is his value as a representative. Just as a medical student does not need to dissect everybody to know human anatomy, so we may find in Isocrates the specimen of the majority of his citizens, just as Demosthenes is the vivid example of the impotent opposition.

The excellence of his art is the very quality in which Athens was supreme, and his love for one is closely bound up with his love of the other. All the charm of letters awaits the student of his smooth and harmonious prose, at the same time that the pages expose the establishment of literary art. We have seen hitherto abundant instances of the same tendency, in Menander and in Xenophon; here the work is accomplished for oratory, and in the dullness of Isocrates's comprehension of the perils that threatened Greece we may see a vivid instance of the fault that always threatens extreme prepossession in favor of literary form. And while Isocrates is significant as the forerunner of the direction in which the Hellenic race was moving, his direct authority over later times can scarcely be exaggerated. The early growth of the art, of which he was perhaps the most brilliant example, is tolerably clear, and its subsequent history is almost with-

out a cloud. Almost every literary accomplishment belonged to him ; he cultivated every flower of rhetoric, and it is an ungrateful world that now rends this man whose faults are obvious, when it has learned from him the power of literary charm. But as he won all the fame that belonged to the period in which he lived, he now suffers for the deeds or rather for the words of a whole people. It must be remembered, however, that those who are attacking him are really assaulting artificial literature, and that literature becomes artificial when public life becomes stagnant. It is to the credit of Greece that when everything else failed them they held true to things of the intellect.

Among the pupils of Isocrates was Isæos, a native of Chalcis in Eubœa, who lived in Athens from 420 B.C. till 348 B.C., and devoted himself to the practice of the law, without mingling at all, as all his predecessors had done, in political questions. This rigid exercise of a profession and the abandonment of politics indicate the beginning of a change in Greek life. Henceforth the Athenians ceased being above all things citizens. Isæos is said to have been a pupil of Isocrates, but his style bears much more likeness to that of Lysias, who, it will be remembered, was a leader in forensic cases. Sixty-four speeches, fifty of which were held to be genuine, are mentioned by ancient writers ; of these eleven and a large fragment of another have reached us, although fifty are said to have survived to the middle of the ninth century. All of these deal with law-cases, and most of them with questions of inheritance. While for many years they have been studied as examples of the greater influence of Lysias, tempered by that of Isocrates, they have for modern students of comparative jurisprudence distinct value for the light that they throw on the Athenian laws. Then, too, he has another most important claim on the reader's attention as the teacher of the greatest orator of Greece, and so of the world, namely, Demosthenes. Fortunately we have left much of the work of the predecessors of this wonderful man, enough at least to show us by what successive steps the Greek language grew up to the condition of a rich, fluent instrument, how the prose freed itself from awkwardnesses and at last acquired a full and varied harmony ; how the art of argument learned simplicity and vigor. It was when this perfection had been attained that the greatest orator spoke, and fortunately for once in studying the success of a Greek master we do not have to conjecture the gradual growth of his art : we can trace it from one speaker to another, and thus get one more proof that every complex form of expression is the result of long experiment and not of sudden inspiration.

In saying that among the Greeks oratory became one of the fine arts, more is implied than at first appears, and certainly a great dis-



inction is noted between ancient and modern eloquence, for the changes that are now affecting public speaking are not at all in this direction. The modern orator has abandoned a style which is indicated if not precisely defined when it is called bombastic, but he is yet far from, and probably will never acquire, the wonderful complexity of the art as it delighted the Athenians. At present the ideal of the world is more nearly scientific than artistic perfection, which was the ideal of the Greeks, and the keen interest that that race took in the accomplishment of its aims has become subordinate to the importance of the aims themselves. The English-speaking races—and the Germans show the same defect—lack the extreme sensitiveness to form that distinguished the Greeks. We try to atone for the dullness of our ears by devising a conventional formality which shall be observed, just as a conventional system of mourning at times suffices for an expression of grief. To the Athenians, to the more cultivated Greeks in general, an oratorical contest was a source of enjoyment not unlike that which musical people know at a good concert. The proper use of language, the position and gestures of the orator, his pronunciation, accent, and tone of voice, were all, as it were, separate instruments producing a complete harmony to which we are deaf. Any one who will compare the coarse work tolerated in our theaters with the exquisite grace and dignity of the Théâtre Français will understand the nature of the difference between the eloquence of Greece and that of other races, and the complexity of the art which grew up under the most refining care of Isocrates to be the mode of utterance for the last of the public-spirited citizens of Athens. If Isocrates could defend making two contradictory statements about the same thing by maintaining that his second account was well expressed and very opportune, we may be prepared to find that Greek orations have as little of the quality of affidavits as do a poet's love-sonnets. The possibility of the substitution of fictitious embroidery in the place of facts indicates very clearly the constantly besetting danger of eloquence, whether in prose or rhyme, when it once becomes an art. This laxity—and Demosthenes himself furnishes instances of it—is the inevitable result of extreme attention to mere effect, and without great care for effect artistic eloquence can not flourish.

Yet while the artistic oratory of the Greeks runs the risk of paying for its vividness by inexactness, it yet shares with what we may call the scientific oratory of modern speakers in a healthy aversion to mock eloquence, to exaggerated declamation. In other words, the finest art will be the simplest, and Demosthenes will leave behind him the artificiality of Isocrates as certainly as he will avoid the exaggerations of Roman oratory. This simplicity that he will attain through his mas-



tery of method and the fervor of his spirit, is like the unrhetorical directness of a few modern speakers who agree with Pascal in thinking that true eloquence knows nothing of eloquence. The resemblance is like that between the physiology of the sense of hearing and the theory of music, or that which is beginning to be recognized, the physiology of the sense of sight and painting, or the gradual discovery of modern literature that there is nothing more solemn or impressive than the facts of life. In short, everywhere the results of true science will be found to coincide with the results of true art.



ATHENA WRITING.

## CHAPTER II.—DEMOSTHENES.

I.—The Life of Demosthenes. His Early Speeches. II.—His Opposition to Philip of Macedon. The Divided Condition of the Greeks. The Position of Demosthenes. His Various Efforts to Arouse his Fellow-Countrymen. The Olynthiac Orations. III.—Attacks Made upon Him. The Further Development of the Long Struggle between Athens and Philip; the King's Success. IV.—Last Years of Demosthenes. V.—Qualities of his Eloquence. Hopelessness of his Position. Contemporary Orators, Pliopion, Hypereides, etc. The Later History of Oratory. VI.—Extracts.

### I.

DEMOSTHENES was born in the year 385 B.C. at Athens, where his father was a rich citizen, the owner of two factories. When he was seven years old his father died, leaving a property of about fourteen talents in the charge of guardians. These men were faithless or incompetent, and when Demosthenes came of age he found himself the possessor of something less than two talents; he thus entered life a poor man. He first obtained occupation in the law-courts, preparing himself for the duties of this profession, it is said, under Isæos. Such is the statement, and it is borne out by the resemblance of the style of Demosthenes to that of his reputed teacher. It is probable in itself that Demosthenes should have chosen for a teacher a man who stood at the head of the profession he was himself proposing to adopt, rather than that he should place himself under a man so far removed from practical experience as Isocrates. Demosthenes was not strong, and kept himself aloof from the usual athletic sports of young Athenians, devoting himself to study. It is said, but very possibly without authority, that he copied out the history of Thucydides eight times and that he knew it by heart, an exercise which it is unlikely that Isocrates would have commended. Other anecdotes have reached us that bear witness to an indefatigable enthusiasm such as young men in Athens and elsewhere seldom show except for physical training. We are free to doubt the stories of his living in a cellar with half of his head shaved, to make it impossible for him to mingle with his kind while he pursued his studies; even the pebbles in his mouth with which he is said to have mysteriously overcome his defective pronunciation—a homœopathic remedy—are possibly more of the nature of gossip than of history. The true residuum of these reports we may take to be



DEMOSTHENES.  
(Statue in the Vatican.)



an indifference to the customary pleasures of his contemporaries and unwearied zeal in the study of oratory. He had many difficulties to overcome: his physical weakness, a feeble voice, a defective pronunciation were all obstacles, and especially to one who intended to speak before the fastidious Athenians, who regarded an orator as something like an actor, from whom they demanded a flawless illustration of the combined graces of speech, presence, and action. Yet Demosthenes overcame these obstacles by persistent labor. What supported him was not an instinctive courage that made the overcoming of his difficulties merely an agreeable exercise; far from it, he was timid and nervous, but it was the quality of this defect that filled him with the fire of a resistless energy. Isocrates, who, it will be remembered, was shy and weak of voice, was able to content himself with cultivating flowers of rhetoric, but Demosthenes was animated by a very different spirit. Moreover, circumstances almost compelled him to a more active part in life. He brought suit against his guardians for the recovery of his squandered inheritance, and won his case. He was also successful in his work in behalf of others, to which his poverty impelled him, and his sincerity and energy won him many friends who aided him in various ways. Thus, the actor Satyros gave him instruction in declamation; he was an apt pupil, he learned from the actors how to hold himself, what gestures to make, how to use his voice, and speedily secured a reputation as an overtrained artificial speaker. His adversaries taunted him with his midnight studies; they said that his orations smelt of oil. "Yes," said Demosthenes, "my lamp and yours are witnesses of very different actions."

It was when thus prepared by study and experience as a speaker, that Demosthenes made his appearance as a political adviser. The occasion was the proposal of one Septines, in the year 355 B.C., when Demosthenes was thirty years old, to reform the law concerning immunities from contribution to the civic expenses, such as the theatrical performances and maintenance of the fleet, etc. Hitherto the festivals had been supported by rich men, and immunity from them had been a reward granted certain families as a token of gratitude for benefits to the state. Septines proposed to abolish these immunities for all except the descendants of Harmodius and Aristogeiton and to forbid them in the future. The position that Demosthenes took was very characteristic: he pointed out the danger that threatened Athens from the bribes of foreigners, and urged the inadvisability of choosing that time for discontinuing public generosity to deserving citizens, and to break with its old custom of rewarding worthy actions. This appeal to the memory of what Athens had been and done in her nobler days was one that Demosthenes often made, and with good

reason, yet he avoided the error of crying for the past ; he demanded a revival of the spirit, not a galvanized imitation of the days of Solon, as Isocrates had done. In another way he ran counter to the advice of that amiable rhetorician, in declining to urge the Greeks to make war on the Persians. When the whole country was disturbed with anxiety concerning the movements of their old foes, in 354 B.C., Demosthenes in his speech on the Symmories, or Navy Boards, pointed out the unlikelihood of serious danger, and the impossibility that the Greeks should combine for any aggressive war. What would have been at any time difficult was now impossible, and any effort to accomplish union would have simply resulted in showing the outside world their internal weakness. "The head and front of your determination consists in a frame of mind such that each man among you shall be willing and eager to do his duty. Whenever you have been united in your aims and each individual has regarded the task of execution as devolving upon himself, nothing has ever slipped from your grasp. On the other hand, whenever you have formed a determination, and then looked at one another, each expecting his neighbor to act while he was to remain idle, everything has failed you." He further went on to advise concerning the reform of the navy, but it was many years before a change was made. With regard to the general question of hostility to Persia, he was more successful, although he attacked one of the strongest of Athenian prejudices. In the next year, 353 B.C., he uttered two orations, *For the Megalopolitans*, and *For the Liberty of the Rhodians*. In the first of them Demosthenes supported, but apparently in vain, the demand of Megalopolitans for aid in their war against Sparta, and he pointed out clearly the peril of even indirectly encouraging the aggressive Spartans ; and in the other oration he defended the Rhodians against the ill-favor of the Athenians, who were glad to see an old enemy defeated, even though it was defending democratic against oligarchic principles.

## II.

The great work of Demosthenes, however, was in opposition to Philip of Macedon, who was slowly devising the plans that were to bring Greece into his power. Gradually this neighboring country had been acquiring civilization, the first steps being taken under Archelaus the First, from 413 to 399 B.C., who, as will be remembered, had brought Euripides and Agathon to his court, and had tried to tempt Socrates thither. On his death, however, the country had relapsed into comparative barbarism, and even its temporary polish had been but superficial. Philip, before he succeeded to the throne in 359 B.C., had



spent three years at Thebes as a hostage, and had there observed attentively the tactics of the great Epaminondas, and the first use he made of his position was to strengthen the military power of his country. His method was full of craft. The Greek colonies hemmed his way to the water, and the Ægean was controlled by three powers, Athens, Amphipolis, and Olynthus: he steadily pursued his course, of isolating his enemies and conquering by detail. He thus acquired Amphipolis, Potidæa, and estranged Olynthus.

The indifference of the Greeks to his persistent, if well-veiled, advance, is not wholly unaccountable. In the first place, the majority held the barbarian in supreme contempt, and were accustomed to fear only the Persians. This new foe who was rapidly growing strong on their northern frontier was an object of no interest to them, especially at the moment when the general concern for affairs of state was giving way before private self-seeking. Then it is not impossible that the old-time zeal of Archelaus for Greek men of letters blinded the eyes of the cultivated Athenians to the dangers that his successor was plotting. They were very conscious of the weaknesses of the Athenian democracy, and were averse to thinking ill of a country where philosophers and writers were so highly thought of. Moreover, the cosmopolitanism which was one side of the new culture, and one that was going to have a vast influence in later times, already inclined educated men to shut their minds against this danger, and to regard international jealousies as trivial matters. In time, too, the number of Philip's adherents was increased by his liberal bribes.

The first and almost the only one to see the future peril was Demosthenes, and the rest of his life may be almost described as a protracted struggle with Philip, who soon recognized in the orator his most formidable antagonist. Yet even he, indomitable as he was when his eyes were opened, was slow in arriving at his determination; in his speech against Septines, in 354 B.C., he, to be sure, mentioned the loss of Potidæa and Pydna, and asked if the men who had given up those two places had not acted from hopes of largess from the king, but elsewhere he made almost no mention of Philip, or, if he spoke of him, did so without expressing any real anxiety. In time, however, matters came more nearly to a crisis. When word reached Athens in the year before that Philip was advancing on the Thracian Chersonese, an armament was voted, although nothing followed the brief spasm of energy. The next year, 351 B.C., Demosthenes astounded Athens by an oration in which he besought the people to break at once with their old leaders and to face the dangers which he pointed out. The oration in which he did this is called the First Philippic. It was not Philip alone that he attacked; it was the Athenian people, whose remissness he was



ever spurring by rigid and unanswerable proof of the necessity of immediate action, by appeals to their former readiness, by comparison of this apathy with the energy of their sleepless foe. All this is poured forth with the most burning eagerness, with a succession of swift, impressive sentences that leave no manner of argument untouched.

"Philip," he says, "is not a man to rest satisfied with conquests won, he is ever enlarging his circle, and whilst we wait and fold our hands, he encloses us on all sides with his toils. When then, Athenians, will you do your duty? For what are you waiting? For necessity? Then what are we to think of present affairs? To my mind, the strongest necessity a free man knows is shame for his cause. Or, tell me, do you prefer to stroll about and ask one another, Is there any news? Why, what newer thing could there be than a Macedonian subjugating Athenians, and controlling the affairs of Greece? Is Philip dead? No, he is only ill. Dead or ill, what difference does it make to you? If anything should befall him you will soon raise up another Philip for yourselves."

Yet eloquent as the speech was, it failed to accomplish any considerable good; a small fleet of four or five ships was sent to the Chersonese under an incompetent commander, and that was all. The Athenians persisted in their indifference to Philip, and continued to reserve all their fears for the Persian king. They were awakened only when it was too late. We know but little of what Philip did in the next two years. When next we hear of him, he was preparing to seize Olynthus, and the people of that town appealed to Athens for aid. The three Olynthiacs, as they are called, deal with this crisis. They were spoken in 350 or 349 B.C., their date and the order of their utterance being uncertain. The embassy of the Olynthians succeeded in persuading the Athenians to send a small force of some thirty galleys and two thousand mercenary troops, a miserably insufficient force; and a second appeal was sent which brought a larger number, still of mercenaries, and under the command of a worthless man.

In the first oration Demosthenes tried to point out how good an opportunity awaited the Athenians to revenge themselves on Philip. If they will only do their duty they will be able to overthrow him; for his weakness needs only defeat to come to light. He describes him as a wicked, arrogant, ungenerous despot. But only firm and swift action will prevail against him:

"If he is ever trying to outdo the past, and you never boldly take hold of anything, what result can be expected? In heaven's name, is there any one so foolish as not to know that if we are remiss the war will soon be here? And then, Athenians, we shall be like men who borrow readily at high rates of interest, and after a brief season of well-being lose even their capital. So, I am afraid that we may at last have paid a high price for our indifference, that our easy ways may in time enforce upon us many a hard and disagreeable task, and that even our homes may be imperilled."

What Demosthenes was really desiring was that the sum set aside as the Festival Fund, moneys by which the Athenians really bribed themselves to sloth, should be devoted to this war, but there was a rule forbidding even the direct proposal of this plan, and the orator could only hint at it. If the sum could be obtained troops could be sent in two divisions,—one to defend Olynthus, while the other made a diversion in Macedon.

In the Second Olynthiac he repeats very much the same arguments, pointing out the disgrace that would follow the abandonment of their allies, and urging every argument to awaken the Athenians from their apathy. He points to the dishonesty on which Philip's success rests, and affirms that the consequent weakness will make itself apparent when war is declared. Then he turns upon the Athenians and points out their notorious shortcomings, their incessant wrangling without action, a most lamentable contrast to their old-time energy as well as to Philip's unceasing efforts:

“Here we remain sitting still and doing nothing, and the sluggard cannot command the services of his friends, much less of the gods. No wonder that he who marches and toils in person, who is on hand everywhere, and never misses an opportunity or lets a season go by, should get the better of us who postpone, pass votes, and ask questions. This does not surprise me. . . . What does surprise me is that you, Athenians, who in old days upheld the cause of Greece against the Lacedæmonians, who declined many chances of selfish profit, who contributed of your own substance, and bore the brunt of danger in the field—and all in defense of the common rights—that you now hesitate to serve and to contribute to preserve your own possessions.”

. In the Third Olynthiac Demosthenes speaks in a severer tone. Before this he had presented grounds for hope, now he mingles solemn warning with his suggestions of the probability of success. An excellent chance remains, if only it be taken, and aid be at once sent Olynthus. Yet this is to be done rather as a matter of defense of the allies than with any expectation of punishing Philip; the time for punishing him is gone. And in order to do this it is not necessary to pass new laws, for there were enough laws already, but to repeal such as are mischievous, like that forbidding any other application of the Festival Fund. This is the only practical means of doing anything; resolutions are of no use; if they had been Philip would have been punished long ago. Then he draws a most vivid picture of the Athens of old times and of the Athens of his own time:

“For forty-five years our fathers ruled over a willing Greece; they brought into the Acropolis more than 10,000 talents; the king of Macedon paid them that submission which a barbarian owes to the Greeks; they built many glorious trophies in memory of their victories by land and sea; they alone



of all men have left an inheritance of renown which envy cannot blast." Now, on the other hand, "when we might have held our own in security, and have been umpires of the claims of others, we have been robbed of our territory, and have spent more than 1500 talents with no result; the allies whom we gained in war have been lost to us in peace through those leaders; we have trained into greatness our enemy and rival. If not, I would ask any one to come forward and tell me whence but from the heart of Athens Philip has drawn his strength. But, I hear it said, things abroad may be bad, yet domestic affairs are better. What are the proofs? The parapets that we whitewash, the road that we repair, the fountains and such trumpery? Look at the men whose rule has produced these fruits. They have exchanged beggary for wealth, obscurity for fame; some have built private houses that are finer than the public buildings, and as Athens has been degraded they have been exalted."

The reason of the change he finds to be the aversion of private citizens to public duty and the great power of politicians:

"At present they control the disposal of emoluments; all business goes through their hands. You, the masses of the people, emasculated, robbed of treasures and of allies, are reduced to the condition of servants and supernumeraries, happy if your friends grant you festival moneys, and get up special processions, and, to crown your manly conduct, you are grateful for being offered what is really yours. Meanwhile, they pen you up within the walls of the city, and conduct you to your pleasures, making you gentle and docile. It appears to me impossible that high and generous sentiments can be inspired by mean and contemptible actions. Men's sentiments must bear the exact impress of their habits." [A phrase that reminds one of Thucydides.] By returning to the old ways, choosing action rather than discussion, good may yet be done. Certainly the scraps of money that are given you for your pleasures are of no use. [And here he made one of the best of his many brief, stinging comparisons]: "Just as the sick man's diet neither gives him strength nor permits him to die, so these gifts that are made to you are not enough to be of any real use or to allow you to turn to something else in despair."

Once more his eloquence had no practical result—indeed, eloquence only truly flourishes when nothing is done by it; the knowledge of this fact alone produces it—and Philip advanced on the doomed city. One more appeal for aid came from it; the Athenians at last sent off a goodly number of citizens this time, but they were too late. Baffling winds detained them, and before their arrival Olynthus had fallen before the wiles rather than the arms of the Macedonians. Philip razed that city and its thirty-two allied towns, and sold 10,000 inhabitants into slavery. This tragic event created the greatest excitement in Greece, but even yet, although this was the beginning of the downfall of Grecian freedom, its full import was not recognized. The severity of his treatment of Olynthus completely broke the spirit of the timid and decided the hesitating. Yet it did not suffice to show all the Greeks the full extent of the peril that threatened them. It was very evident, however, that something had to be done.



## III.

During the time that these momentous events were taking place, Demosthenes had been the object of the severest attacks from the party that was opposed to his aggressive policy, and every means was taken to overthrow his considerable influence. The most formidable assault was made in the year 348 B.C. by a certain Meidias, an old foe of Demosthenes, whose anger had been newly kindled by the orator's opposition to the Eubœan war, which he regarded as an indirect assistance to Philip by distracting the Greeks from more important events. In that year Demosthenes had taken upon himself the duty of providing the chorus for his tribe at the Great Dionysia, and Meidias undertook to thwart him in every way in his power. At last, after trying to secure beforehand an unfavorable opinion from the dramatic judges, he wholly lost his temper and slapped the face of Demosthenes before the whole theater. Demosthenes brought suit against him for contempt of the festival, and his speech of accusation has come down to us. It is full of severe indignation and not unnatural wrath; it is interesting, as everything must be interesting that throws light on this remarkable man, and as a specimen of the violent invective in which ancient orators indulged. It shows, too, the persecution which dogged the steps of a prominent Athenian, but it is far less important than the great political activity of Demosthenes. This was evidently his own opinion, for without pushing the case to its end he dropped the matter in 347 B.C., and became a member of the embassy that was sent to Philip to arrange a peace.

That he who had so eagerly encouraged fighting with Macedon should now be anxious to arrange a peace was no inexplicable inconsistency; for an attempt to unite all the Greeks into a confederacy had failed, and time was needed for new preparations. It was now that we find Demosthenes coming across his future antagonist Æschines, the orator who was to be the mouthpiece of all the opposition to his proposals. This man, born 393 B.C., of an old Athenian family that had been ruined in the Peloponnesian war, had known a chequered experience, as usher in his father's school and as an actor, besides holding a position in the service of Eubulos and Aristophon, two enemies of Demosthenes. He had also served with credit as a soldier. Six years earlier than Demosthenes he made his appearance as a public orator, a position for which he was fitted by his knowledge of law and his powerful and well-trained voice. He possessed by nature an equipment that was denied his greater rival. At first he was an enthusiastic opponent of Philip; gradually, however, his lack of principle enrolled

him among the supporters of that powerful monarch. The steps by which he fell away are not clear; it is not impossible that mere jealousy of Demosthenes may have hastened his downfall.

This embassy of ten, which included Æschines and Demosthenes, found Philip full of promises and apparent amiability. Demosthenes, his readier rival tells us, was overcome with embarrassment and made a complete failure when he tried to address Philip. Modesty was never a failing of Æschines, and he made a long speech in which he proved from mythical and actual history that Athens had a clear title to Amphipolis, an argument that must have amused Philip, who had just made recent history and become the owner of that city. The terms of peace the ambassadors brought back were the maintenance of the present condition of things, this condition being made more palatable by a vague promise of great services. When the question came for debate by the assemblies of the people, it was found that two allies of the Athenians were especially excluded, the Phocians and the town of Halus in Thessaly. Æschines urged the acceptance of the treaty subject to this omission; Demosthenes urged the exclusion of this clause. The Macedonian plenipotentiaries refused to admit this exclusion which was voted by the assembly, and the Athenians let themselves be persuaded by Philocrates and Æschines, two of the ambassadors to Macedon, to play into Philip's hand. They said that he would protect the Phocians and degrade Thebes, the old rival of Athens, and their words were believed. More mystifications followed; the men sent to receive the ratification of the treaty from Philip and his allies were singularly inert and remiss, while that king was steadily approaching Thermopylæ. Demosthenes was laughed at when he pointed out the imminence of the danger, and the Athenians found it easier to trust Philip's words than his actions. The upshot of the whole matter was that the Phocians, who, like all Greece, were torn by intestine dissensions, gave up Thermopylæ to Philip. This pass, where alone resistance could be made to his march into the heart of Greece, was now his, and, one might almost say, was thrust into his hands by the Athenians, who let themselves be hoodwinked and cajoled into refusing to help to defend it. The opposing Phocian towns, twenty-two in number, were dismantled, the inhabitants were scattered among the villages and compelled to pay a heavy tribute, as well as deprived of their horses and weapons. More than this, the rights of the Phocians in the Amphictyonic Council were transferred to Philip, and the right of precedence in consulting the oracle was transferred from Athens to him. He was also chosen to preside at the Pythian games in 346 B.C. By this important change, Philip was received into the Hellenic commonwealth at the religious center, a step which must have



been extremely gratifying to his ambition, as well as most impressive to his friends and foes. Those who tacitly or openly encouraged him now had some justification for their confidence. Hopes of a united Greece under him as leader became more common, as we may see from the letter in which Isocrates urged Philip to assume this position. Yet the Athenians, although they had done so much to bring about his success, were for the most part recalcitrant now that their eyes were at last fairly opened. They refused to send any representatives to the Pythian games, and the greatest opposition was aroused when Philip sent ambassadors to demand recognition of what had been done. Many patriots demanded that this be indignantly refused, but Demosthenes, in his speech *On the Peace*, delivered toward the end of 346 B.C., gave wiser counsel. He pointed out that he had been constant in his warnings against Philip, and that he had only exercised a careful judgment, but that now, these opportunities being lost, there was nothing for them to do but to resign themselves to the existing state of affairs. Any other conduct would expose them to attack from the combined forces of the Amphictyonic union, and it would be madness to go to war for "the shadow of Delphi." This oration, although, as is evident from its nature, it lacks the accustomed fire and energy, belongs to a series in which Demosthenes tried to make clear the new dangers that threatened to call forth a final struggle between Athens and Philip. Isocrates represents those who were ready to kiss the hands of their conqueror. Demosthenes was trying to form a party that should depose the lukewarm or hostile from power, and form a great Greek union against Philip. A pretext was not long wanting; Philip began his persistent intrigues in the Peloponnesus, and Demosthenes went to Messene and Argos to countermine his plots. It was in the *Second Philippic*, spoken at Athens in 344 B.C., that he relentlessly branded the dishonesty of the king, and once more denounced his hollow promises, this time to protect those two cities against Sparta. It was apparently in discussing the matters brought up by the Messenian and Argive envoys that the speech was made, in which he warns the Athenians to be on their guard and to be ready to combine with the other Greeks against Philip.

Under the inspiration of his glowing words, and strengthened by the obvious march of events, the patriotic party was growing in Athens to such an extent that in 343 B.C. Hyperides, another orator, was able to impeach Philocrates, a creature of Philip's, and to have him condemned in his exile to death. At about the same time Demosthenes brought charges against Æschines for treacherous conduct on the occasion of his second embassy. The whole story is told in the oration *On the Embassy*, in which he at the best dubious conduct of



Æschines is exposed at great length. It was not because he made peace that Demosthenes accused him, but because he made a disgraceful and ruinous peace. All of the conduct of Æschines is set in a light that makes a favorable judgment difficult. Æschines made an answer and managed to escape conviction, but by a very meager victory, having a majority of only thirty votes.

For a short season the Athenians blocked some of Philip's moves, but in 341 B.C. he began to make himself felt in the Thracian Chersonese, a region of vital importance to Athens because it commanded its supplies of grain from the Black Sea. Difficulties arose between the subjects of Macedon in that quarter and Diopeithes, the Athenian general, whose recall was demanded by the party of Philip in Athens. In his speech *On the Chersonese*, Demosthenes presented the absolute necessity of maintaining their position in that place. The Third Philippic, spoken a few months later, repeated the same advice, and brought out fully the proposal that Athens should take up arms and place herself at the head of a Hellenic league. Yet she must remember that the work will not be done by others:

"If you think that Chalcidians or Megarians will save Greece, while you shrink from the contest, you are mistaken. . . . The task is yours: it is the privilege won and bequeathed to you by your ancestors at the cost of many great dangers."

And with that wide-sweeping observation and wisdom which is one of his most striking qualities, he affirms that the change from the earlier spirit is not a mere accident.

"Once there was in the heart of the people something which is not to be found now, something which overcame the wealth of Persia and kept Greece free, which was never conquered in battle by land or sea."

This was a hatred of bribery.

"Now those old principles have been, as it were, sold in open market and new ones have been imported, by which Greece has been brought to miserable weakness. And what are these? Envy, if a man has accepted a bribe; ridicule, if he confesses it; pardon, if his guilt is proved; hatred of those who condemn him; all usual accompaniments of corruption."

The Athenians were now fully aroused, and for some time Philip failed of his usual success. Demosthenes was now the acknowledged leader of the state, and his dauntless and indefatigable energy blocked the Macedonians at almost every step. He carried his influence elsewhere into Greece, encouraging and directing the patriotic party wherever it appeared, and at the same time wisely directing matters at home. At last his old proposal regarding the disposition of the Festi-

val Fund for military purposes was carried, and a wiser system of taxation introduced. Unfortunately, however, a new Sacred War began, apparently in a great measure under the instigation of Æschines, and Philip found this an opportunity to enter Greece under the pretext of protecting religion. No sooner had he got inside Thermopylæ than he seized Elatea and acquired possession of the passes leading into Bœotia. The excitement that this event produced in Athens will be found in the famous oration on *The Crown*, of which mention is made below. There he recounts with sober satisfaction how, still unbroken, he succeeded in persuading Thebes and Athens to forget their old antagonism and side by side to face Philip at Chæronea, where the freedom of Greece was overthrown.

#### IV.

Although after his victory Philip was master of the whole country, he treated Athens with great forbearance, declining to impose a Macedonian garrison and letting her retain her municipal independence. Demosthenes gave his whole attention to internal affairs, awaiting Philip's death as a possible opportunity for regaining freedom. The most important event of his later years was his great oratorical duel with Æschines, in 330 B.C., when, six years after Philip's death, Alexander's power made revolution hopeless, and Æschines chose that time for a deliberate attack on his rival. In 336 B.C. Ctesiphon had proposed that a golden crown should be given to Demosthenes as a reward for his services in behalf of the state, a measure that Æschines at once opposed on various technical grounds. For six years, however, he delayed bringing the matter before the courts, until the final victory of the Macedonian power seemed to assure his success. Stripped of its technicalities, the speech against Ctesiphon was simply an indictment of the whole career of Demosthenes before a large number of Athenians and foreigners who were assembled in view of the importance of the occasion. The reply of Demosthenes was an account and explanation of his whole conduct; how eloquent and complete it was the extract given below will serve to show. His speech is the masterpiece of the world's oratory, and his victory was complete. Æschines, whose oration possesses great merit, failed to receive one-fifth of the votes, and in consequence he left Athens, betaking himself to Rhodes, where, it is said, he opened a school of elocution. The story runs that there he once recited to his pupils the oration of Demosthenes *On the Crown*, and when they expressed their admiration he asked them, "What if you had heard the beast himself speak it?"

Five years later Demosthenes was accused of malversation of moneys



ÆSCHINES.  
(*Marble Statue from Herculaneum.*)

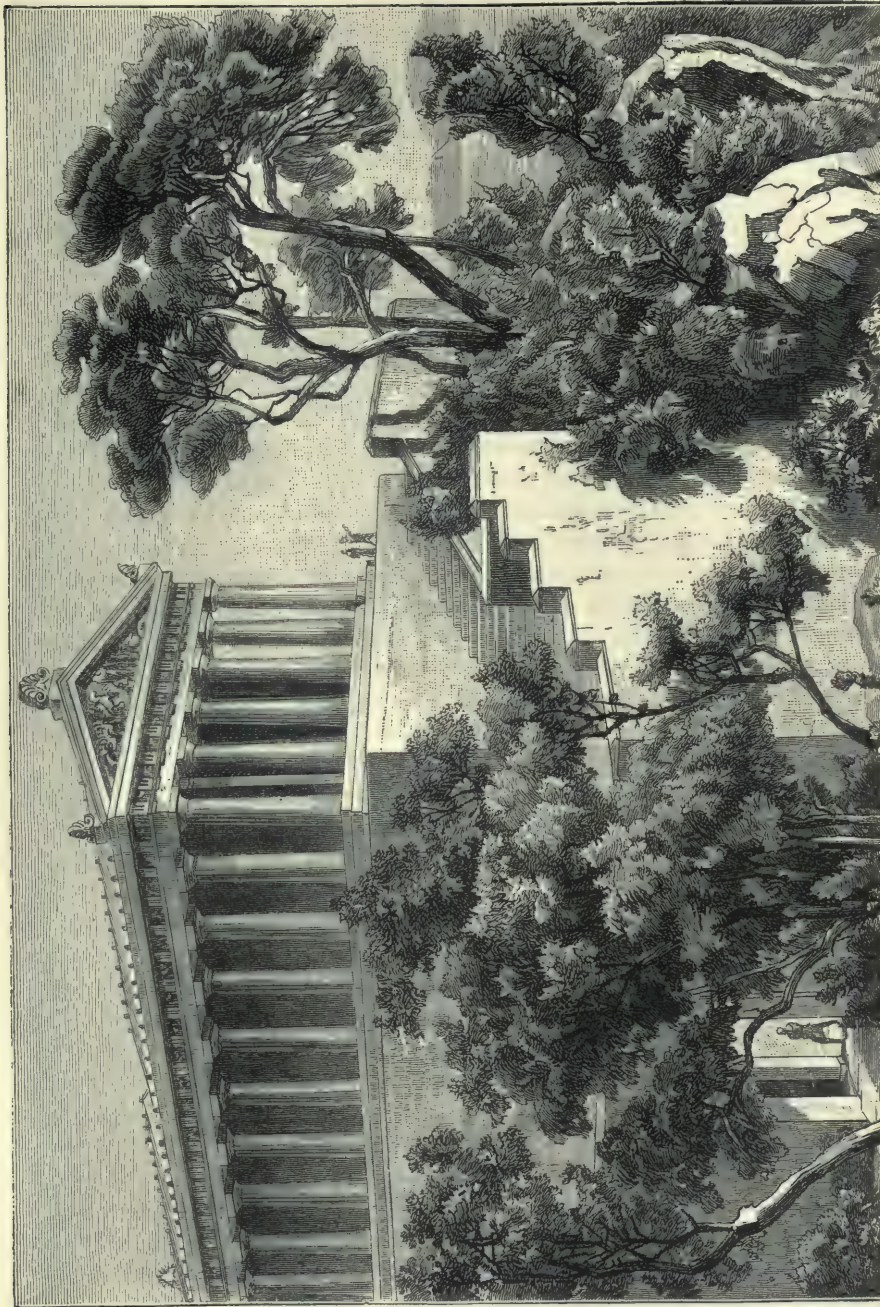


and was found guilty. The whole story reaches us in a confused state, and modern opinion inclines in favor of his innocence, mainly from the difficulty of believing that a man of so lofty character could have been guilty of the vulgar crime of receiving a bribe. At the worst, it is held, he received a sum of money from Harpalus, a defaulting treasurer of Alexander's, to serve as the foundation of a war fund for future use. Whatever the exact state of the case may have been, Demosthenes was condemned to prison, whence, however, he managed to make his escape, and as Plutarch relates "he might often be seen sitting on the shores of Troezen and Ægina, gazing towards Attica with tear-filled eyes." In 323 B.C., when Alexander died and there seemed a chance for Greece to throw off its yoke, Demosthenes was recalled to Athens, a galley was sent to bring him back from Ægina, and a procession headed by priests and archons accompanied him on his way to the city. Their hopes were soon destroyed; the battle of Crannon, in 322 B.C., following the death of the leading Athenian general Leosthenes, destroyed all chance of resistance, and Athens was compelled to receive a Macedonian garrison, to make over its constitution, and to surrender the leading patriotic orators. A decree was passed by the Assembly condemning Demosthenes and Hyperides to death. Demosthenes had already fled from Athens, and was found by his pursuers—exile hunters they were called—in a temple of Poseidon in Calauria. It was a former actor, Archias by name, who tried to tempt him from this secure retreat, but Demosthenes said, "Archias, you have never imposed upon me by your acting, and you can not impose upon me now by your promises"; and when he was threatened he said, "Now you speak like a Macedonian oracle; before, you were only acting. Wait a moment till I write a line to my friends at home." Then he took poison and soon died, first leaving the temple to avoid polluting it by his death. This was in 322 B.C., when he was about sixty-two years old.

Besides what Demosthenes did in behalf of his unfortunate country, he labored as a private advocate, and many of the speeches that he wrote in this capacity have come down to us. These are about thirty in all, although many of them are adjudged spurious. What is curious in these speeches is the freedom of invective permitted before the courts; this was a common quality of Athenian eloquence, although more prominent here. Important as they are for the light they throw on Athenian law, they sink into insignificance by the side of the public orations.

## V.

What characterizes the eloquence of Demosthenes in these greatest triumphs of his genius is his resistless force. Other orators have been



TEMPLE OF POSEIDON AT CALAURIA.



famous for pathos, for grace, for dignity, for grandeur, for the vigor of their logic: we are carried away by him with but little chance to analyze or describe the feeling that has swept us off our feet. Of artifice or conventionality he shows no trace. All that art could furnish had been absorbed by him, and never appeared as an external accomplishment. Rules seem not to exist for him. The venerable Isocrates lived upon them: he spent ten years on a political pamphlet that at once on its appearance took the place in ancient history that it now holds, and we can conceive of him in serious distress over the balancing of sentences and paragraphs. In Demosthenes the quick question and answer, the perpetual fire of suggestion, argument, ridicule, contempt and enthusiasm lies far beyond the laws of conventional rhetoric. The lesson to be learned by the hearer is enforced by repeated and vigorous blows; there is apparent no premeditated arrangement, no assemblage of arguments into battalions which sweep forward in heavy masses like troops at a review, when the infantry advances after half an hour's cannonading: far from such orderly movement, he carries us at once into the heat of a genuine combat where all is hot and confused, but is yet under the control of a real commander who knows when to assault, when to seem to give ground, and presses on irresistibly to victory. Isocrates is always on parade, anxious that his forces keep step and touch; Demosthenes shines on the battle-field. And as, other things being equal, it is the general who leads the best trained forces that will win, so Demosthenes maintains order in apparent chaos through his knowledge of all the technique that was painfully acquired by his predecessors. From Isæos in particular he learned the brevity that gave his sentences the swift effect of musketry fire. Thucydides had already taught the serious lesson that human fortune was the inevitable result of human actions, a truth that animated the whole effort of Demosthenes to persuade the Athenians to resume their former high position. Yet he did this without sharing their local, narrowing prejudices; outside of Athens, he saw Greece; and above Greece, he saw the eternal laws of right that alone prevail. The growth of his perception, the gradual widening of his sympathies, may be clearly observed by the student who reads his orations in their chronological order. And above all his intellectual force, marvelous as this is, stood his noble moral character with its energy, its futile patriotism, its exalted love of duty and of everything honorable. Two thousand years afterward, none can read without emotion the story of the wreck of Grecian freedom; apathy, corruption, had prepared the sad event; as the tragedy moves to its completion, the doomed hero's voice is heard counseling, warning, advising, encouraging. Constantly he is about to succeed; one vain effort is made after another,



but with a languid force, with insufficient means, until finally the play is over and the curtain falls on the extinction of Athenian freedom. One does not need to be a Cato to love the defeated cause. Yet it is to be borne in mind that it is to the reason that Demosthenes makes constant and urgent appeal, and herein lies his greatest force, although, as has been well said by Mr. Butcher in his admirable monograph on the great orator, "thought is everywhere interpenetrated with feeling, reason is itself passionate." It is a lofty intelligence that is swayed, not overwhelmed, by feeling; his intellect is heated by passion, but never to the point of bending. The whole character of Greek eloquence makes clear the superiority of this method, and nothing shows it better than the almost imperative rule that an oration should not end in a turmoil of excitement. That must be allayed before the termination, or all its power is illegitimate. The only exception in the history of Greek eloquence is the conclusion of the oration *On the Crown*, which ends with terrible imprecations before the final blessing; everywhere else the rigid control of the artistic sense enforces a calm like that of the closing lines of the tragedies. It is certainly a marvelous proof of the store that the Greeks set by intellectual dignity, that they thus forbade the unfair prominence of the emotions.

In the pathetic story of the powerless efforts of Demosthenes to arrest the course of public affairs, we are reading more than a single personal tragedy, although he will fill the position of hero in the melancholy drama. It was the defeat of what survived of the old spirit of Athens that wrings the heart of the student, who finds little consolation in the fact that it was inevitable, and but the natural result of division in the face of a superior united force. While Isocrates was disposed to assent to the new condition of things, and at the same time held the position of superiority in literary art, Demosthenes preserves the old excellence of the bright days of Greece, not merely in his political beliefs, but in his superiority to mere literary qualities. His wonderful preëminence is not of the kind that text-books can teach, but is the last glow of that amazing quality of the Greeks which defies thorough definition. Every one of the traits of Isocrates has been studied, named, and classified; grammarians and rhetoricians have grown rich on the exposition of his art; in Demosthenes everything is subordinate to the eagerness of his message, and he is as superior to formal excellence of expression as is the statement of truth to mere elegance of form. The lofty spirit of courage and independence that he tried to arouse in his fellow-citizens found its counterpart in his impassioned language, just as the mistaken wisdom of Isocrates, with its incompetent vision of the real matter at stake, suited that orator's rhetorical shallowness. What we miss to make the picture complete

is some report of the speeches of Phocion, the practical-minded man, whose personal incorruptibility was rare and famous; he it was whom Demosthenes called the cleaver of his speeches. If we had what he said, we should doubtless find plainness of speech, such as became a man who looked at facts in the face, and was as far from the fancies of Isocrates on the one hand as from the sublime enthusiasm of Demosthenes on the other. With all the evidence before us, we should have a complete view of the hopeless division of the city, and a ready comprehension of its fall. It was the glory of the past that animated Demosthenes, and with him vanished the last cry of what mere literature has never been able to repeat.

Besides these orators, who so well represent the protracted struggle before the final defeat of Athens, there were others, of more or less repute, in the parties that contested for the control of the policy of that ill-fated city. Of these, Lycurgus, Hyperides, and Dinarches were included in the canon of the ten Attic orators composed by the later Alexandrine critics. The first-named of these, born in 408 B.C., was a friend and supporter of Demosthenes. Of his work only a single oration has come down to us, that against Leocrates, an Athenian who deserted his country after the battle of Chæronea. This speech impresses the modern reader with greater respect for the orator's patriotism than for his eloquence. At the time when it was spoken, however, Athens perhaps stood in greater need of patriotism than of eloquence, and the career of Lycurgus gave many proofs of his personal merit. We are told that he was instrumental in securing a careful copy of all the tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides for the state archives, and, what was doubtless more appreciated by his contemporaries, that he did faithful service as treasurer of the public funds. He died in 323 B.C. Hyperides was the most famous of these three, and by some of the ancients he was rated in certain qualities higher even than Demosthenes, whose friend he was for a long period, although finally he became a bitter foe and secured his exile from Athens. It is said that at last they became reconciled. Hyperides was born in a deme of Athens, so famous for the eloquence of its inhabitants that one of the Fathers of the Church, Tertullian, asserted that the children born in it talked before they were a month old. This precocity, if it ever existed, was not followed by dumbness in later life, as this orator, and Æschines; born in the same happy conditions, clearly show. He began his career by preparing speeches for parties in the law courts, and when he was thus fitted by practice he made his appearance as an orator. He was, we are told, a pupil of Plato and Isocrates, and thus received the best instruction that the time could furnish. By allying himself with Demosthenes, after the





PHOCION.



peace between Athens and Philip in 346 B.C., he became a leader of the patriotic party, and the two men held a bold front against the enemy of their country. The unfortunate quarrel between them, which is a distinct intimation of the way in which matters had complicated themselves, resulted favorably for Hyperides and left him practically in the control of the state. They were brought together again by common persecution, and Hyperides, like his illustrious rival, was tracked by officials who made a business of laying their hands on the men proscribed by the authorities. In 322 B.C. he was put to torture and killed.

Until very recently only the scantiest fragments of the speeches of Hyperides remained, but between 1847 and 1857, a number of Egyptian papyri came to light that contained one whole oration and important parts of others. Unfortunately these do not illustrate some of the qualities for which he was most famous, namely, his wit and vividness of speech, and unwearying variety. The funeral oration which we have of his gave but little opportunity for the display of such qualities. The other fragments, however, bear witness to his naturalness and facility. His apparent simplicity, his freedom from the chains of art, survive here, just as the grace of Attic work still lives in a mutilated fragment of sculpture.

Dinarches, the third of these men, was by birth a Corinthian, who acquired considerable fame by the legal speeches which he composed at Athens after its subjugation by Macedon. He died in 292 B.C. Such of his work as survives is marked by no very vivid qualities.

Of the other Attic orators the most important were Demades, Critias, Callistratus, Aristophon, Cephisodoros, Hegesippus, Eubulus, and Demochares. Demades was an ardent adherent of the Macedonian party and naturally a bitter foe of Demosthenes. He was strongly suspected, and nothing seems more probable, of being bribed by Philip,—ten talents appears to have been the sum paid. His thrift was perhaps greater than his eloquence, for he received another bribe of five talents from the friends of Demosthenes to secure from Alexander the remission of the order to surrender that orator and other patriots, and other instances of similar disinterestedness in the way of receiving money have been told. The man was a worthless creature on whom there is no other occasion to dwell than that these anecdotes, and they seem to be well attested, make plain the degeneracy of Athens, and the hopeless nature of the struggle which Demosthenes was forever endeavoring to make. He appears to have possessed a ready and effective eloquence, that was, in its way, sometimes a match even for that of Demosthenes.

The various orators—as an attempt has been made to show in the cases of Isocrates and Demosthenes, the two leaders—have another

value than that which belongs to them as masters of eloquence, namely, as expressions of the divided councils that then existed in Athens. Demades stands for the party of corruption, whose grandfathers were branded with eternal infamy by Aristophanes, and Phocion shows clearly in his life some of the influences that had long been at work disintegrating Greek society through the teachings of the philosophers. The full extent of their modification of the intellectual, religious, and political habits of their countrymen must be seen below; here it is possible only to point out the fact that those leaders of thought, by their aristocratic principles and their cosmopolitanism, which inclined them to accept the leadership of Macedonia, founded a considerable party in Athens, of which Phocion was the head. While Demosthenes looked upon this party as a collection of traitors, they, in their turn, regarded him as an impracticable lover of the past; they saw, what events proved, that his cause was a hopeless one, and in their protracted conflict we may see a vivid picture of the complexities that time introduced into their political condition. The aristocratic tendencies of the cultivated classes are obvious enough: in behalf of their cosmopolitanism, it is only necessary to say that it was, as will be seen, a principle that had long been preached by the ablest thinkers; and although Demosthenes speaks of the Macedonians as barbarians, it must be remembered that although they were less cultivated than the Greeks, they possessed the same religious beliefs, and that there were no greater linguistic differences between the two races than already existed between the Dorians and the Ionians.

One proof of the influence of Plato upon Phocion is given by Plutarch in his life of this distinguished man, when he says that once when Phocion was blamed for letting Nikanor escape after showing traitorous designs, he answered that he felt perfect confidence in Nikanor's words, and saw no reason for suspecting him of evil designs; "whatever the upshot may be I had rather be found suffering, than committing, injustice." This is a sentiment that we shall find below to have been uttered by Plato in one of his dialogues, and although Plutarch is a faithful disciple of that great philosopher, he draws the line here and wonders whether Phocion by adhering to this rule did not break another and higher obligation to his country. This incident in Phocion's life shows at least the many-sidedness of the problem which had to be solved by the contemporaries of Demosthenes.

Critias, one of the thirty tyrants, was a famous speaker as well as writer of tragic and elegiac poetry. It was Callistratus whose excellence, it is said, turned the attention of the youthful Demosthenes to public speaking. The story runs that Demosthenes, on being asked



who was the greatest orator, said, "I am when one reads me; but Callistratus when one hears him." Aristophon owes the preservation of his name to its complimentary mention by Demosthenes in his oration against Leptines. Cephisodoros, a friend of Isocrates, wrote a defense of him against the attacks of Aristotle. Hegesippos was an ally of Demosthenes. Eubulus, on the other hand, was one of the bitterest of his foes. Demochares, a nephew of Demosthenes, was one of the more important of the later statesmen and a worthy supporter of his uncle's principles. But in his time eloquence had practically ceased to exist; yet the shadow of it survived, and men studied the art of speech, of gesture, of oratorical language, in the schools of rhetoric, where the pupils laboriously acquired the faculty of marking time and learned to listen with rapture to the sound of their own voices. Books on rhetoric became common, and during the reign of Alexander and later, orators indulged in speeches on formal occasions with no real design in view except that of affording delight in artificial eloquence. This period is known as the time when what is called Asiatic oratory prevailed, for it was in Asia Minor and the adjacent islands that the art flourished. Æschines, we have seen, established a school of the sort at Rhodes; Hegesias, a writer of history, Demetrius of Attica became known later for the same work. In this way disappears the last trace of the once magnificent Greek oratory. Its work was done when it ceased to concern itself with actualities; it was mere rhetoric of the schools in its later days, though even here it remained an important part of education and exerted very great influence upon the Romans.

#### THE SECOND OLYNTHIAC.

I am by no means affected in the same manner, Athenians! when I review the state of our affairs, and when I attend to those speakers who have now declared their sentiments. They insist that we should punish Philip: but our affairs, situated as they now appear, warn us to guard against the dangers with which we ourselves are threatened. Thus far, therefore, I must differ from these speakers, that I apprehend they have not proposed the proper object for your attention. There was a time indeed, I know it well, when the state could have possessed her own dominions in security, and sent out her armies to inflict chastisement on Philip. I myself have seen that time, when we enjoyed such power. But now, I am persuaded we should confine ourselves to the protection of our allies. When this is once effected, then we may consider the punishment his outrages have merited. But till the first great point be well secured, it is weakness to debate about our more remote concerns.

And now, Athenians! if ever we stood in need of mature deliberation and counsel, the present juncture calls aloud for them. To point out the course to be pursued on this emergency, I do not think the greatest diffi-



culty : but I am in doubt in what manner to propose my sentiments ; for all that I have observed, and all that I have heard, convinces me that most of your misfortunes have proceeded from a want of inclination to pursue the necessary measures : not from ignorance of them. Let me entreat you, that, if I now speak with an unusual boldness, ye may bear it : considering only whether I speak truth, and with a sincere intention to advance your future interests : for you now see that by some orators, who study but to gain your favour, our affairs have been reduced to the extremity of distress.

I think it necessary, in the first place, to recall some late transactions to your thoughts. You may remember, Athenians ! that about three or four years since, you received advice that Philip was in Thrace, and had laid siege to the fortress of Heræa. It was then the month of November. Great commotion and debates arose. It was resolved to send out forty galleys ; that all citizens under the age of five-and-forty should themselves embark ; and that sixty talents should be raised. Thus it was agreed : that year passed away ; then came in the months of July, August, September. In this last month, with great difficulty, when the mysteries had first been celebrated, you sent out Charidemus, with just ten vessels unmann'd, and five talents of silver. For when reports came of the sickness and the death of Philip (both of these were affirmed), you laid aside your intended armament, imagining that at such a juncture there was no need of succours. And yet this was the very critical moment : for had they been despatched with the same alacrity with which they were granted, Philip would not have then escaped, to become that formidable enemy he now appears.

But what was then done cannot be amended. Now we have the opportunity of another war : that war, I mean, which hath induced me to bring these transactions into view, that you may not once more fall into the same errors. How then shall we improve this opportunity ? This is the only question. For if you are not resolved to assist with all the force you can command, you are really serving under Philip, you are fighting on his side. The Olynthians are a people whose power was thought considerable. Thus were the circumstances of affairs : Philip could not confide in them ; they looked with equal suspicion upon Philip. We and they then entered into mutual engagements of peace and alliance : this was a grievous embarrassment to Philip, that we should have a powerful state confederated with us, spies upon the incidents of his fortune. It was agreed that we should by all means engage this people in a war with him. And now, what we all so earnestly desired is effected ; the manner is of no moment. What then remains for us, Athenians ! but to send immediate and effectual succours, I cannot see. For besides disgrace that must attend us, if any of our interests are supinely disregarded, I have no small apprehensions of the consequence (the Thebans affected as they are toward us, and the Phocians exhausted of their treasures), if Philip be left at full liberty to lead his armies into these territories, when his present enterprises are accomplished. If any one among you can be so far immersed in indolence as to suffer this, he must choose to be witness of the misery of his own country rather than to hear of that which strangers suffer ; and to seek assistance for himself, when it is now in his power to grant assistance to others. That this must be the consequence if we do not exert ourselves on the present occasion, there can scarcely remain the least doubt among us.

But as to the necessity of sending succours, this, it may be said, we are

agreed in ; this is our resolution. But how shall we be enabled ? that is the point to be explained.—Be not surprised, Athenians ! if my sentiments on this occasion seem repugnant to the general sense of this assembly.—Appoint magistrates for the inspection of your laws : not in order to enact any new laws ; you have already a sufficient number ; but to repeal those whose ill effects you now experience, I mean the laws relating to the theatrical funds (thus openly I declare it) and some about the soldiery. By the first, the soldier's pay goes as theatrical expenses to the useless and inactive ; the others screen those from justice who decline the service of the field, and thus damp the ardour of those disposed to serve us. When you have repealed these, and rendered it consistent with safety to advise you justly, then seek for some person to propose that decree, which you all are sensible the common good requires. But till this be done, expect not that any man will urge your true interest, when, for urging your true interest, you repay him with destruction. Ye will never find such zeal, especially since the consequence can be only this : he who offers his opinion, and moves for your concurrence, suffers some unmerited calamity ; but your affairs are not in the least advanced ; nay, this additional inconvenience must arise, that for the future it will appear more dangerous to advise you than even at present ; and the authors of these laws should also be the authors of their repeal. For it is not just that the public favour should be bestowed on them, who, in framing these laws, have greatly injured the community ; and that the odium should fall on him whose freedom and sincerity are of important service to us all. Until these regulations be made, you are not to think any man so great, that he may violate these laws with impunity ; or so devoid of reason as to plunge himself into open and foreseen destruction.

And be not ignorant of this, Athenians ! that a decree is of no significance, unless attended with resolution and alacrity to execute it. For were decrees of themselves sufficient to engage you to perform your duty ; could they even execute the things which they enact ; so many would not have been made to so little, or rather to no good purpose ; nor would the insolence of Philip have had so long a date. For if decrees can punish, he hath long since felt all their fury. But they have no such power ; for though proposing and resolving be first in order ; yet, in force and efficacy, action is superior. Let this then be your principal concern ; the others you cannot want, for you have men among you capable of advising, and you are of all people most acute in apprehending ; now, let your interest direct you, and it will be in your power to be as remarkable for acting. What season indeed, what opportunity do you wait for, more favorable than the present ? or when will you exert your vigour, if not now, my countrymen ? Hath not this man seized all those places that were ours ? should he become master of this country too, must we not sink into the lowest state of infamy ? Are not they whom we have promised to assist, whenever they are engaged in war, now attacked themselves ? Is he not our enemy ? is he not in possession of our dominions ? is he not a barbarian ? is he not every base thing words can express ? If we are insensible to all this, if we almost aid his designs ;—Heavens ! can we then ask to whom the consequences are owing ? Yes, I know full well, we never will impute them to ourselves. Just as in the dangers of the field : not one of those who fly will accuse himself ; he will rather blame the general, or his fellow-soldiers ; yet every single man that fled was accessory to the defeat : he who blames others might have maintained his own post ; and had every man maintained his, success must



have ensued. Thus then, in the present case, is there a man whose counsel seems liable to objection? let the next rise, and not inveigh against him, but declare his own opinion. Doth another offer some more salutary counsel? pursue it, in the name of Heaven! But then it is not pleasing. This is not the fault of the speaker, unless in that he hath neglected to express his affection in prayers and wishes. To pray is easy, Athenians! and in one petition may be collected as many instances of good fortune as we please. To determine justly, when affairs are to be considered, is not so easy. But what is most useful should ever be preferred to that which is agreeable, where both cannot be obtained.

But if there be a man who will leave us the theatrical funds, and propose other subsidies for the service of war, are we not rather to attend to him? I grant it, Athenians! if that man can be found. But I should account it wonderful, if it ever did, if it ever can, happen to any man on earth, that, while he lavishes his present possessions on unnecessary occasions, some future funds should be procured, to supply his real necessities. But such proposals find a powerful advocate in the breast of every hearer. So that nothing is so easy as to deceive one's self: for what we wish, that we readily believe: but such expectations are oftentimes inconsistent with our affairs. On this occasion, therefore, let your affairs direct you; then will you be enabled to take the field; then will you have your full pay. And men whose judgments are well directed, and whose souls are great, could not support the infamy which must attend them, if obliged to desert any of the operations of a war from the want of money: they could not, after snatching up their arms and marching against the Corinthians and Megareans, suffer Philip to enslave the states of Greece, through the want of provisions for their forces. I say not this wantonly, to raise the resentment of some among you. No: I am not so unhappily perverse as to study to be hated, when no good purpose can be answered by it: but it is my opinion that every honest speaker should prefer the interest of the state to the favour of his hearers. This (I am assured, and perhaps you need not be informed) was the principle which actuated the public conduct of those of our ancestors who spoke in this assembly: (men, whom the present set of orators are ever ready to applaud, but whose example they by no means imitate :) such were Aristides, Nicias, the former Demosthenes, and Pericles. But since we have had speakers, who, before their public appearance, ask you: What do you desire? What shall I propose? How can I oblige you?—the interest of our country hath been sacrificed to momentary pleasure and popular favour. Thus have we been distressed; thus have these men risen to greatness, and you sunk into disgrace.

And here let me entreat your attention to a summary account of the conduct of your ancestors, and of your own. I shall mention but a few things, and these well-known; for if you would pursue the way to happiness, you need not look abroad for leaders; our own countrymen point it out. These our ancestors, therefore, whom the orators never courted, never treated with that indulgence with which you are flattered, held the sovereignty of Greece, with general consent, five-and-forty years; deposited above ten thousand talents in our public treasury; kept the king of this country in that subjection which a barbarian owes to Greeks; erected monuments of many and illustrious actions, which they themselves achieved, by land and sea: in a word, are the only persons who have transmitted to posterity such



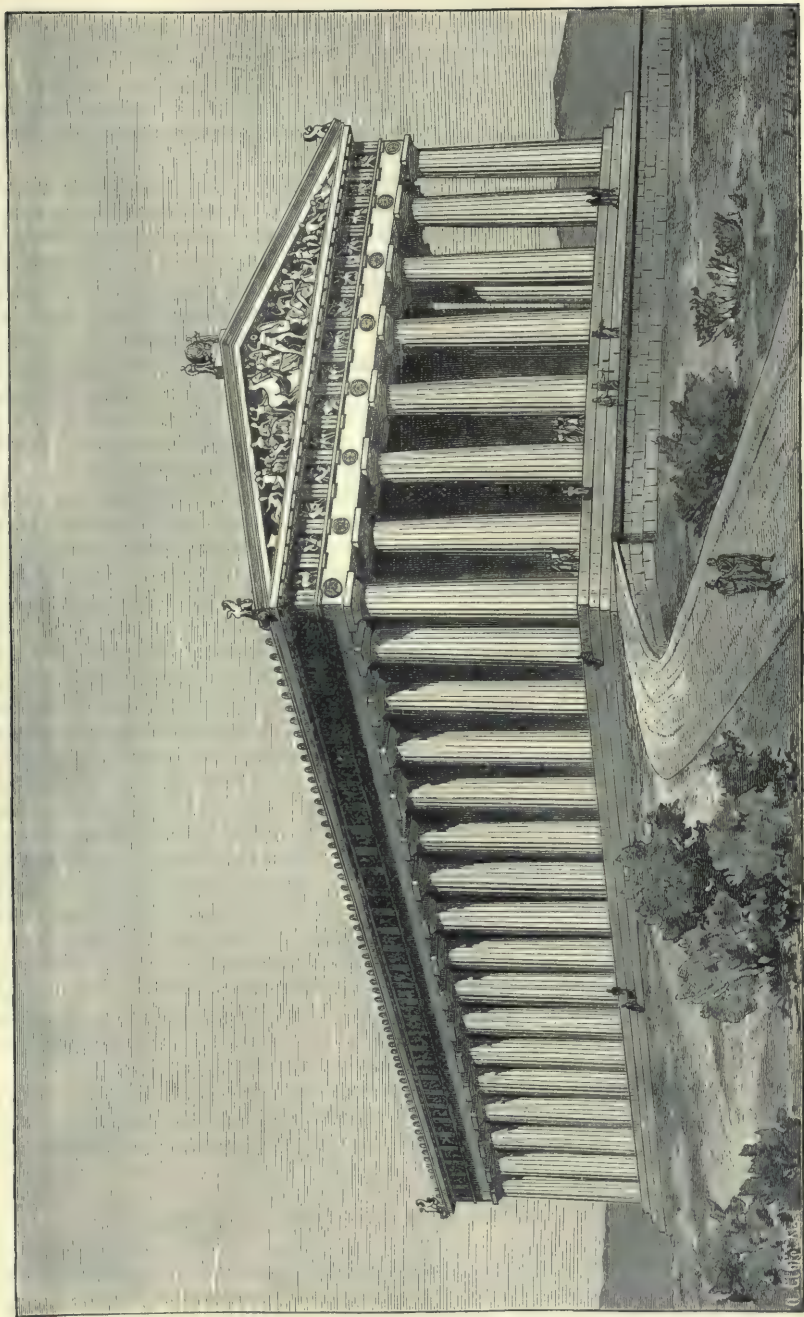
glory as is superior to envy.—Thus great do they appear in the affairs of Greece.

—Let us now view them within the city, both in their public and private conduct. And, first, the edifices which their administrations have given us, their decorations of our temples, and the offerings deposited by them, are so numerous and so magnificent, that all the efforts of posterity cannot exceed them. Then, in private life, so exemplary was their moderation, their adherence to the ancient manners so scrupulously exact, that if any of you ever discovered the house of Aristides, or Miltiades, or any of the illustrious men of those times, he must know that it was not distinguished by the least extraordinary splendour. For they did not so conduct the public business as to aggrandize themselves; their sole great object was to exalt the state. And thus by their faithful attachment to Greece, by their piety to the gods, and by that equality which they maintained among themselves, they were raised (and no wonder) to the summit of prosperity.

Such was the state of Athens at that time, when the men I have mentioned were in power. But what is your condition, under these indulgent ministers who now direct us? Is it the same, or nearly the same?—Other things I shall pass over, though I might expatiate on them. Let it only be observed that we are now, as you all see, left without competitors; the Lacedemonians lost, the Thebans engaged at home; and not one of all the other states of consequence sufficient to dispute the sovereignty with us. Yet, at a time when we might have enjoyed our own dominions in security, and been the umpires in all disputes abroad, our territories have been wrested from us; we have expended above one thousand five hundred talents to no purpose; the allies which we gained in war have been lost in time of peace; and to this degree of power have we raised an enemy against ourselves. (For let the man stand forth who can shew whence Philip hath derived his greatness, if not from us.)

Well! if these affairs have but an unfavourable aspect, yet those within the city are much more flourishing than ever.—Where are the proofs of this? The walls which have been whitened? the ways we have repaired? the supplies of water; and such trifles?—Turn your eyes to the men of whose administration these are the fruits, some of whom, from the lowest state of poverty, have arisen suddenly to affluence; some from meanness to renown: others have made their own private houses much more magnificent than the public edifices. Just as the state hath fallen, their private fortunes have been raised. And what cause can we assign for this? How is it that our affairs were once so flourishing, and now in such disorder? Because, formerly, the people dared to take up arms themselves; were themselves masters of those in employment; disposers themselves of all emoluments; so that every citizen thought himself happy to derive honours and authority, and all advantages whatever, from the people. But now, on the contrary, favours are all dispensed, affairs all transacted, by the ministers; while you, quite enervated, robbed of your riches, your allies, stand in the mean rank of servants and assistants: happy if these men grant you the theatrical appointments, and send you scraps of the public meal.

And, what is of all most sordid, you hold yourselves obliged to them for that which is your own: while they confine you within these walls, lead you on gently to their purposes, and soothe and tame you to obedience. Nor is it possible that they, who are engaged in low and grovelling pursuits, can



THE PARTHENON AT THE TIME OF PERICLES.



entertain great and generous sentiments. No ! Such as their employments are, so must their dispositions prove. And now I call heaven to witness, that it will not surprise me if I suffer more, by mentioning this your condition, than they who have involved you in it ! Freedom of speech you do not allow on all occasions, and that you have now admitted it excites my wonder.

But if you will at length be prevailed on to change your conduct ; if you will take the field, and act worthy of Athenians ; if these redundant sums which you receive at home be applied to the advancement of your affairs abroad ; perhaps, my countrymen ! perhaps some instance of consummate good fortune may attend you, and ye may become so happy as to despise those pittances, which are like the morsels that a physician allows his patient. For these do not restore his vigour, but just keep him from dying. So, your distributions cannot serve any valuable purpose, but are just sufficient to divert your attention from all other things, and thus increase the indolence of every one among you.

But I shall be asked, What then ! is it your opinion that these sums should pay our army ?— And besides this, that the state should be regulated in such a manner, that every one may have his share of public business, and approve himself a useful citizen, on what occasion soever his aid may be required. Is it in his power to live in peace ? He will live here with greater dignity while these supplies prevent him from being tempted by indigence to anything dishonourable. Is he called forth by an emergency like the present ? Let him discharge that sacred duty which he owes to his country, by applying these sums to his support in the field. Is there a man among you past the age of service ? Let him, by inspecting and conducting the public business, regularly merit his share of the distributions which he now receives, without any duty enjoined, or any return made to the community. And thus, with scarcely any alteration, either of abolishing or innovating, all irregularities are removed, and the state completely settled, by appointing one general regulation, which shall entitle our citizens to receive, and at the same time oblige them to take arms, to administer justice, to act in all cases as their time of life and our affairs require. But it never hath, nor could it have, been moved by me, that the rewards of the diligent and active should be bestowed on the useless citizen ; or that you should sit here, supine, languid, and irresolute, listening to the exploits of some general's foreign troops (for thus it is at present).—Not that I would reflect on him who serves you in any instance. But you yourselves, Athenians ! should perform those services for which you heap honours upon others ; and not recede from that illustrious rank of virtue, the price of all the glorious toils of your ancestors, and by them bequeathed to you.

Thus have I laid before you the chief points in which I think you interested. It is your part to embrace that opinion which the welfare of the state in general, and that of every single member, recommends to your acceptance.

#### FROM THE ORATION ON THE CROWN.

Such being the nature of the controversy, I beseech you all alike to listen to my defence to this accusation with the fairness which the laws require. Those laws, established long ago by Solon, who was your well-wisher and a friend of the people, were thought by him not only to be binding by reason



of their inscription, but because you were sworn to observe them. Not that, as it seems to me, he distrusted you in so causing you to be sworn, but that he foresaw that the accused could never escape the enmities and malice in which the strength of the prosecutor, from being allowed to speak first, lies, unless each one of the jury, guarding his probity by an appeal to the gods, should listen favourably and justly to what should be asserted by the defence, and in the same spirit of impartiality to both sides enter upon an examination of the whole cause. Since I am about to give, then, as it would seem, an account as well of my whole private life as of my public career, I desire, as in the outset, to appeal again to the immortal gods, and in presence of you all I implore them first to direct you to show to me in this contest the same kindness which I have ever felt to you and to your city; next, that they will inspire you so to pass upon this prosecution as shall redound to your common credit, and to the elevation of the character of each one of you.

Had Æschines merely followed in the line of his attack the matters upon which he has founded the prosecution, I could have readily defended the preliminary decree; but since he has, in unmeasured speech, gone over many other things, scattering the foulest abuse upon me, it is necessary and proper that I should first briefly reply to these, lest some of you, led astray by such foreign matters, might hear me with disfavor upon the merits of the charge itself.

See how fairly and directly I shall answer all that this man has so slanderously alleged against my private life. If you have known me to be such as he accuses me,—and I have lived my whole life among you,—permit not my voice to be heard, no matter how well I have managed public affairs, but rise and condemn me on the spot. If, on the other hand, you believe and know me to be better and of better descent than my accuser, and—not to speak too presumptuously—that I and mine are inferior to no respectable citizens, then disregard everything which he has said about my public life, since it will be apparent he has falsified in everything. I shall only ask you to shew me now the same kindness which you have always shewn in the past in the many contests in which I have been engaged. But malicious as you are, Æschines, you must be very simple to think I shall now pass by all that you have said about my political course, and begin by taking up your abuse of my private character. I shall do nothing of the kind. I am not quite so absurd. I shall first notice your falsehoods and slanders about my public life; and afterwards touch upon the scurrilous abuse you have been pouring out so freely upon me, should the jurors wish to hear me about it.

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Philip, having thus by these means embroiled the cities, puffed up by the decrees and his answers to them, advanced with his forces against Elatea and took possession of it, thinking that happen what might, you and the Thebans would never be united. Though you all know the alarm which this caused to Athens, hear from me a few words about it, and these only the most necessary. It was evening—A messenger arrived to inform the Presidents that Elatea was taken. Immediately rising from supper, some of them drove from their tents those who were engaged in traffic in the marketplace, and set fire to the booths; whilst others sent for the generals, and called out the trumpeter: great was the excitement in the city. The next morning at daybreak the Presidents called the Council together in their Chamber, and you all assembled in public meeting;—before the Council

had advised or offered anything for consideration, every deme was seated in its place upon the hill-side. When the Council arrived, and the Presidents proclaimed the news, and introduced the messenger who spoke out his message, the herald demanded, "Who desires to address the meeting?" No one stood forth. After the herald had many times made the same demand, no one responded, although all the generals, all the orators were present, and their country by her common voice called upon each citizen to advise concerning her safety: for when the herald lifted up his voice, according to law, it is right to call it the common voice of our country. If it behooved all who desired the salvation of their country to come forward, all of you and the rest of the Athenians would have stood up, and mounted the platform; for all, I well know, desired her salvation. Had it concerned the rich in particular, the three hundred would have risen up. Had it concerned those who were both warmly attached to their country and also wealthy, they who immediately afterwards gave largely for the common interests would have been there, for they gave from patriotism as well as wealth. But, as it appeared, the day and the occasion required not merely a rich and patriotic citizen, but one who had followed the subject from the very beginning, and could correctly understand why it was that Philip was thus acting, and what was his ulterior purpose. He who was ignorant of this, or who had not followed it carefully for a long time, was totally unfit, notwithstanding his patriotism and his wealth, either to see what it was necessary to do, or to advise you how to do it.

I was the man who appeared on that day, and who, ascending the platform, addressed you. What I then told you, you should now listen to attentively for two reasons: first, that you may know that I alone, of all the orators and counsellors, did not desert the patriot's post in that hour of danger, but both by speech and written decrees advised what was most useful to you in your time of peril; next, because by spending a little time upon this you will much more readily comprehend all the rest of the policy of the day. I spoke as follows: "Those persons, I thought, who were greatly troubled at the Thebans being under Philip's control, ignored the real state of things, for I well knew that if this had been the case we should have not only heard of Philip being in Elatea, but on our very borders. I was clearly, however, of opinion that he was coming to Thebes to bring this about.—How the matter now stands," I said, "hear from me.

"Philip has won over many of the Thebans by bribing some and deceiving others: those, however, who have withstood him from the first, and are now opposed to him, he will in no wise be able to gain. What, then, is his purpose, and why has he occupied Elatea? By making a great shew of strength and displaying his arms he has raised up and inspired confidence to his adherents, and to the same extent depressed his enemies. He will thus compel these last either to join him through fear, which they do not wish to do, or they will be crushed out completely. If, therefore," said I, "we are now disposed to remember the old offences of the Thebans against us, and to distrust them as enemies, we shall be doing exactly what Philip wants; and I fear that even those of them who are now unfriendly will join him, and then all having Philippized with one consent, he and they will march together against Attica.

"If you will listen to me, and look dispassionately at what I am going to propose, I think I can shew what is best to be done, and remove the present danger from the city. What, then, do I propose? First of all dispel



your present apprehension, and feel and fear for the Thebans. The danger is much nearer to them than to us, for to them the peril is immediate. Next, let all who are able march at once with the cavalry to Eleusis, that every one may see you are in arms. Your partisans in Thebes will thus be enabled to speak out freely on the right side equally with their opponents, when they know that while there is a force at Elatea to back up the traitors who have sold their country to Philip, you are prepared to stand by them and assist them, should any one attack them, while they desire to contend for their country's freedom.

"Further, I recommend that ten ambassadors be chosen, with equal power with the generals, to fix the time for going thither and for the march out. When the ambassadors shall reach Thebes, how do I propose the question shall be dealt with? Give me here your earnest attention. Endeavor to obtain nothing from the Thebans (to attempt it at such a time would be base), but say to them we have come to aid them, if they desire it, in their time of extreme peril, as we foresee better than they what is going to happen. Should they accept our offer, and hearken to us, we shall have obtained what we wish, and our conduct will wear a color worthy of the city; should we be unsuccessful, then they will have themselves to blame for having mismanaged their business, and we shall have done nothing mean or dishonorable."

Having thus spoken, and much more to the same effect, I descended and sat down. Every one concurred. Not a dissenting voice was heard. I not only spoke thus, but I wrote the decree; I not only wrote the decree, but I went on the embassy; I not only went on the embassy, but I persuaded the Thebans. I went through with everything from the beginning to the end, and gave myself up entirely to you, in the existing danger to the City. Bring me the decree which was then passed.

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Since, however, Æschines insists so strongly upon the result, I desire to enounce a proposition which may at first seem paradoxical. Do not, in the name of Jupiter and all the gods, be astounded at it because it seems extreme, but listen without prejudice to what I am about to say. Had the issue been already known to you all,—had all foreseen it, and had you, Æschines, bawled yourself hoarse in proclaiming it,—although you uttered not a whisper,—even then the city should not have hesitated to undertake what she did, having regard to her true glory, to our ancestors, to posterity. Now indeed she appears to have been unsuccessful, which is a common chance, when the gods so will it. But then she would have incurred the reproach of delivering over the Greeks to Philip, if after claiming the headship of all Greece she had voluntarily descended from it. Had she then resigned without a struggle that which our forefathers spared no dangers to achieve, who would not then have spit upon you, Æschines,—not upon me, not upon the city? With what eyes, good God, could we have looked upon strangers visiting the city, had the result been what it is and Philip been chosen the lord and master of us all, the rest of our countrymen, WITH-  
OUT us, contesting his claim? Especially when in bygone days our city had shrunk from no danger in the cause of honor, rather than repose in an inglorious security. What Greek indeed, what barbarian does not know that the Thebans, and the Lacedemonians before them all-powerful, and the Persian king himself, would thankfully and readily have permitted Athens to take what she wished and to keep her own, had she been willing



to obey the behests of the stranger and suffer him to assume the command of Greece? But such things, as it seemed to the Athenians of those days, were neither patriotic, nor natural, nor supportable; nor could any one in all past time have prevailed upon the City to succumb to the powerful evil-doer, sitting down in safe submission. No, she ever encountered every peril, in the contention for the first place, and for honor and glory. And you, yourselves, regard this conduct as so august, and as so conformable to your own thoughts and feelings, that those of your ancestors who have so acted are held by you in the highest esteem. And properly: for who does not admire the virtue of the men who preferred to quit their City and their country, and embark upon their ships, rather than endure servitude, electing to their command Themistocles, who had so counselled them; nay, even stoning to death Kyrtilus, who had advised submission:—not only *him*, but your wives also putting his wife to death. Those Athenians sought not an orator or a general by whom they might be enslaved, they preferred not to live, unless they could live free. Each one of them believed that he was born, not only for his father and his mother, but for his country also.—And the difference is this.—He who thinks that he is born for his parents only, waits for his appointed and natural end: but he who thinks he belongs to his country also, prefers to die rather than to see her enslaved, and fears more than death itself, the insults and dishonor which must be borne when his city is enthralled. Were I to assert that it was I who had induced you to adopt resolves worthy of your ancestors, there is none who might not justly reprove me. I now proclaim that these resolves were your own, and that the same opinions were held by the City before my time. I only say that some of the credit from each of these measures should be given to me. But this fellow, who finds fault with everything, and who is instigating you to condemn me as the author of all the City's alarms and calamities, is striving to deprive me, indeed of this present honor, but is taking away from you your just eulogy for all time to come. For if you now convict Ctesiphon by condemning me as not having pursued the best policy, then will you appear to have erred, and not to have suffered what has happened from the injustice of Fortune. But you have not, you have not erred, Athenians, in encountering peril for the liberties and safety of your countrymen. I swear it by the spirits of your fathers, who went forth to face death at Marathon, by the men who stood in battle array at Plataea, by those who fought by sea at Salamis and Artemisium, by the throng of worthies now reposing in the public sepulchres,—all gallant men,—all buried by the City as deserving of the same honor.—Yes, Æschines, all,—not the victorious and successful only,—all:—and justly. For all alike did the work of noble men, and all were subject to the influence of that fortune which the Divinity assigned to each. And you, accursed scribe, have been talking of the trophies and battles and great deeds of the olden time, wishing to rob me of the good opinion and honor of my countrymen. Which one of those deeds does this present controversy stand in need of? But, oh third-rate actor, when the City's leadership of Greece was in question, in what disposition did it become me to advise when I arose to speak? Was it to counsel something unworthy of these our citizens?—I had been justly put to death had I done so!—My fellow citizens, you should in nowise deliberate in the same manner in a private controversy and upon a public question. In matters of every day life you must be governed by the particular facts and the laws applicable to them; in affairs of State you

must judge in a spirit worthy of your ancestors. And when you are called to decide public questions, each one of you, along with his badge and staff of office, must take up the spirit of the City, if you deem it your duty to act worthily of your ancestors.

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When the Commonwealth was able to choose the best course, and when to strive for its advantage in public affairs was a matter of emulation with all, I counselled most wisely, and by my decrees and my laws and my embassies everything was directed ; and you, none of you, were to be found anywhere, unless it was necessary to do the State a mischief. When adversity came, and there was no longer a searching out for counsellors, but for men who were working for those behind them, who were ready to prostitute themselves for pay against their country, and to flatter the stranger, then you and your fellows came forth radiant, and great, and splendid,—and I, I admit it, was very low, but still your friend,—while these men were not. Two qualities, Athenians, an upright statesman should possess,—and I thus speak as I am speaking of myself to avoid being invidious,—when in power, he should advocate a policy both honorable and lofty ; and at all times, and in all contingencies, he should be loyal to his country. This last quality is native to the heart,—power and strength depend upon other things,—and this last you have always found abiding in me. Although my person was demanded by the stranger, although cited before the Amphictyonic Council, although harassed by many prosecutions, although hounded by these miscreants who pursued me like wild beasts, never have I faltered in my allegiance to you. From the beginning I chose unconditionally the straight and upright course in politics,—to uphold the honor, the power, the glory of my country, to increase them if I could, to live and have my being in them. When the stranger was successful, then did not I stalk about our public places with beaming face, rejoicing, stretching out the right hand to those who I hoped would report it OVER YONDER. Neither did I with a shudder hear of any success to the City, walking with downcast eyes and sorrowful face, like these accursed men who speak ill of and belittle Athens (as if, in so doing, they did not speak ill of and belittle themselves), who look outside of their country, exulting in the success of the STRANGER and the misfortunes of Greece, and asserting that we should take care, he shall always be successful.

Let not, O ye Gods, let none of these things be approved by you. Rather inspire these men with a better mind and counsels ! But if they be incorrigible, destroy and utterly confound them, whether they be on sea or land,—and to us grant the shortest period to the woes which have been fastened upon us, and provide for us an enduring salvation !



## BOOK VI.—THE PHILOSOPHERS.

### CHAPTER I.—THE EARLY PHILOSOPHERS AND SOCRATES.

I.—The Originality of Greek Philosophical Thought. The Earliest Philosophers and their Views, Physical and Metaphysical. The Ionians; Pythagoras, and the Vague Report of His Life and Teachings; Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Empedocles, etc. II.—The Atomists. Our Dependence on Aristotle for Information, so that we get but Glimpses of the Past, yet these Glimpses Attract Students. Anaxagoras in his Relation to the Athenian Public. The Sophists in Athens. Their Evil Repute. The Growth of Individualism in Philosophy going on All Fours with its Spread in Literature. III.—Protagoras, his Ethical Teachings. Conservative Opposition to New Thought. The Cosmopolitanism of Philosophy Distasteful to Patriotic Greeks. Philosophy an Aristocratic Attribute, like Modern Letters, unlike Modern Science. IV.—The Fine Promises of the Sophists; Rhetoric as a Cure for Life's Woes. Contempt for Science. V.—Socrates; his Life. His Novel Aim, and Method of Instruction. His Ethical Teaching. His Practical Side. His Cross-examination of Civilization. The Mystery of his Death. His Following. The Cynic and Cyrenaic Schools.

#### I.

ALONGSIDE of the marvelous way in which the Greeks treated the various questions of life that came up before them for settlement or discussion, runs their continuous attempt to define what was the world in which they lived, and in what relation it stood to man. The effort to solve these difficult matters is the function of philosophy; philosophers are those men who think that they have solved them. Their answers have been many in number and varied in kind. In Greece were laid the foundations on which most of the later men have worked, and it is interesting to study the different steps of philosophical thought in this country. Once more are we taken back to observing the growth of what is in good measure original work, for here, as in literature, there are no positive traces of the indebtedness of the Greek mind to foreign models. Those systems, which bear the closest analogy to the result of Oriental thought grew up in Italy and Sicily, regions the furthest removed from the East. Isocrates, to be sure, asserts that Pythagoras drew some of his lessons from Egypt, but Isocrates is only a feeble authority on any matter of fact, and Plato and Aristotle fail to corroborate him. The analogies, such as

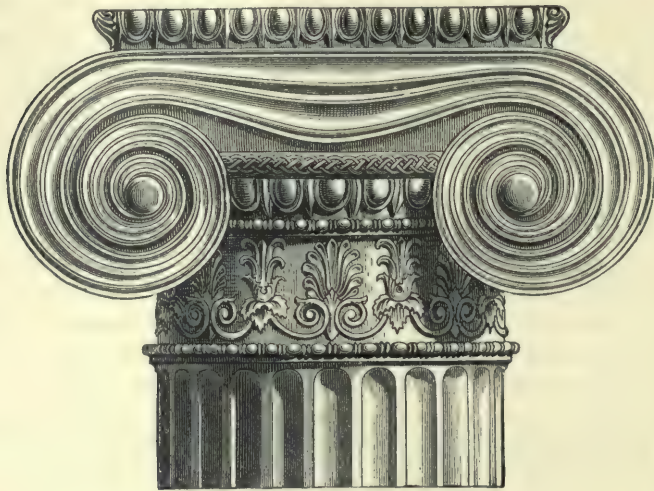


they are, may be satisfactorily accounted for as accidental coincidences of equally crude thought. And those moderns who have been led by the assertions of later Greeks to look abroad for the origin of their complicated and various philosophical systems have not succeeded in establishing their theories with anything like firmness. The Egyptians, the Hindoos, even the Chinese, have been at different times candidates for the honor of inspiring the Greeks with their early philosophical conceptions, but in general it is supposed that there is no satisfactory proof of foreign aid. Indeed, the naturalness of the growth of the Greek philosophy, from the crudest and simplest beginnings through a uniform continuous development, renders the hypothesis at present superfluous. Whatever outside influences may have come in were at least absorbed without a jar that is now manifest to investigators. And, too, there is no trace in the philosophy of the Greeks of the theological character that is strongly marked in Oriental speculations on such subjects. Even if the hypothesis is not disproved, its necessity is not clear. So much seems probable; it is not merely a result of the common disposition to exaggerate the powers of the Greeks that suggests their originality in this respect.

Yet it must be said that the whole question of the amount to which the Greeks were indebted to other civilizations is far from a final solution. In general the same spirit that led the Athenians to boasting that they sprang from the soil of Attica inspired them further to insist upon their independence of foreign aid, and this assumption has long been repeated by the moderns as part of the general disposition to ascribe a semi-miraculous quality to the power of the Greek mind. The discovery of the relationship of the languages of the Indo-European family gave it a shock, and the more recent investigation of the remains of neighboring civilizations has tended to break up this long-lived exclusiveness. One discovery after another is made that shows how this or that bit was introduced into Greece from some adjacent country; yesterday, it was some conventional figure in sculpture or painting; to-day, it is the capital of the Ionic column, and every such instance renders more likely and more acceptable the notion that intellectual as well as artistic material was absorbed in the same fashion. But what survives is the Greek treatment of the material thus acquired, which is no less remarkable now than it ever was. Everything that came into their possession was bountifully developed.

Homer and Hesiod were without weight in the development of the earliest Greek philosophy; their acceptance of life and presentation of its facts were anything but speculative. Indeed, the mythological explanation was at all times a serious foe to abstract thought, which

could in no way accept the current explanation. There existed apparently in very early times a vast body of Orphic verse, as it was called after its alleged author, Orpheus, some of which, it is said, consisted of cosmogonies, but these early attempts perhaps did more in the way of arousing than of satisfying interest in philosophical questions. The border-line between a vague mythology and a crude cosmogony was very indistinct, and Pherecydes of Syros, apparently about 600 B.C., although his date is uncertain, with his prose theogony; Epimenides, a contemporary, who described the world as issuing from night and air, were moving in the direction that was pursued by the earliest of



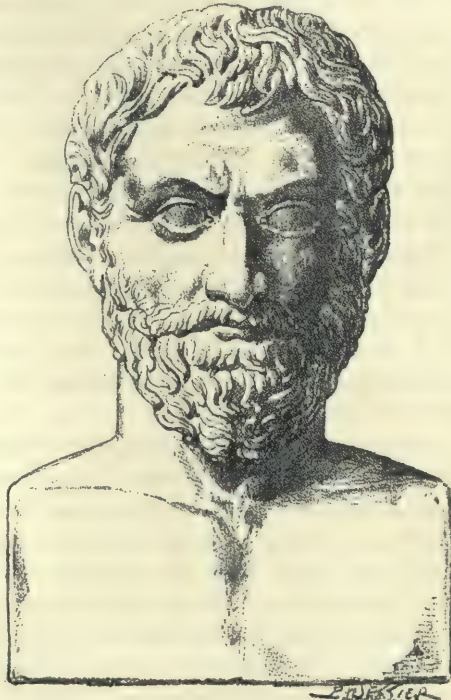
CAPITAL OF THE IONIC COLUMN.

those who first fairly deserved the name of philosophers. The Seven Wise Men were long revered for the utterance of the maxims which confront us at the dawn of every civilization expressing the ethical principles that are as fixed as physical laws; but, as a Greek said, they were rather men of sound common-sense and law-givers than sages or philosophers. Yet it was one who is sometimes included in their number to whom the credit belongs of establishing the lines on which for a long time philosophy was to advance. This honor belongs to Thales of Miletus, a city which we have already seen to be a center of intellectual activity. There he was born, as some say, in 640 B.C., others 624, of Phœnician descent, and won great fame by his astronomical studies, which enabled him, to the amazement of his contemporaries, to foretell an eclipse. He is said to have traveled in Egypt, and possibly it was his observation of the dependence of that



country upon the annual inundation of the Nile that inspired him to utter his great principle that water was the original source of all things. The importance of this statement lay in the direct substitution of a natural for a mythological explanation of the universe. Crude as it was, it was yet a beginning of science that was here expressed. The thought was not developed by Thales, who never explained in what way water was transformed into other substances; he remained contented with his guess, or with this reminiscence of the old Aryan myth concerning the stream of the storm cloud that fertilizes the earth, and he left the full expansion of it to his successors.

The first of these was Anaximander, also a Milesian, and, like Thales, a distinguished mathematician and astronomer. In his view of philosophy there lay outside of water, which he agreed with his predecessor in making important, a certain material Infinite wherefrom all waste and destruction were continually repaired. The origin of the world was explained in this wise: warmth and cold made their separate appearance, and by their union produced moisture, whence arose the



THALES OF MILETUS.

earth, that has gradually acquired firmness. Living beings were in time developed out of this moisture by means of heat. They first appeared in the form of fishes, acquiring their present form as the earth grew dryer. Anaximines, another Milesian, and somewhat later, took air for the first principle; its condensation produced fire, wind, clouds, water, and the earth. The earth he held to be flat and circular, and to be upheld by the air. Other philosophers who held similar views were Idæus of Himora and Diogenes of Apollonia in Crete. These men are generally classified together as members of one school, as the Ionic Natural Philosophers, from the tendency of their studies towards physics.



Both of these men owed much to their predecessor, Anaximines, whose doctrine, as we have seen, bears much resemblance to that of Anaximander, except that he took for the beginning of all things Air. Obviously the process by which fire and stone are both brought from air must have been crudely explained, and the infancy of both physics and philosophy is clearly visible here in the similar work of his rivals. Diogenes of Apollonia carried out these physical explanations to a fuller development, but his chief merit appears to have been the enlargement of the empirical knowledge of nature. His philosophy had already been outgrown elsewhere by men starting from other principles, yet it will be noticed that in these vague explanations of the Ionic philosophers we find the rudiments of the guesses that have since been made concerning nature. What has been done in modern times is apparently a development of these ingenious hypotheses. Similarly, the metaphysics of the Greeks with its thin divisions, the Eleatic, that of Heraclitus, and the atomist, covers the ground of later metaphysicians; for they decide respectively that being is everything and that change is only apparent; that change is everything and being but an illusion; and finally, that there is at once permanence and change, permanence in the beings, perpetual change in their relations.

An important school was that of the Pythagoreans, who were found mainly in Italy and Sicily. Its founder, Pythagoras of Samos, was born about 580 B.C., and he settled in the southern part of Italy about 529 B.C. There is little known about this remarkable man, whose eminence made him the subject of a great deal of mythical gossip. He was an adherent of the Oriental doctrine of metempsychosis, and he exerted himself in behalf of political, religious, and philosophical advance. The book of sayings ascribed to him is apparently not wholly genuine. The most striking thing in his philosophy is the importance given to numbers. Everything, he maintained, was made out of numbers: they were the absolute principle of existence; in them the finite and the infinite met. What this curious statement indicates, is the intense delight that these early students felt for the new science of mathematics, which seemed to them to unfold all the mysteries of nature. To their thinking it implied the existence of a universal harmony towards which all human effort should be directed, and the influence of Pythagoras was distinctly exerted in this direction. He did not confine the functions of philosophy to the region of abstract thought, but by his ethical teaching he alone of the philosophers before Socrates gave instruction about the conduct of life. He thus contributed to the great movement of religious enthusiasm that passed through Hellas in the sixth century before Christ in connection with

a general intellectual excitement that found expression in the unrivaled outburst of lyric verse. His teachings were in strict accord with the implied necessity of universal harmony that marked a distinct advance in philosophical conceptions; and in science, too, he furthered progress by forming his hypotheses in accordance with this grand idea. His statement that the earth is a globe marks an obvious advance on earlier thought, and the notion of the harmony of the spheres fitted in most boldly with the general conception, for it assumed that the intervals between the celestial spheres corresponded with the relative length of strings when adjusted to produce harmonious tones. Some of the early Pythagoreans taught the rotation of the earth on its axis, and its movement around the sun; even in antiquity, however, such views were regarded as heretical. The ethical teaching of this remarkable man was expressed by mathematical symbols; thus, justice was defined as a square number, whereby there was expressed the correspondence of action and suffering. Alcmaeon, the Crotoniate, a pupil of Pythagoras, taught that the brain was the seat of the soul, and that all sensations were carried thither through canals from the organs of sensation.

The Pythagoreans then, under the influence of a grand conception of the universe, were enabled to form most vivid and ingenious scientific hypotheses, and to give ethical teaching an apparent resting-place in science, such as the world had not known. The philosophical notion of the value of numbers, which was the corner-stone of the whole system, in time fell away, or rather perhaps developed into the science of mathematics.

Every exposition of the philosophy of Pythagoras and of his school is complicated by the extremely uncertain nature of the information that requires to be sifted and arranged. There is a vast abundance of it; but, starting with the most meager supply, it grows in bulk the further it gets from the original sources, so that we find at last a huge mass of untrustworthy evidence. It is clear, however, that the notion of the numerical harmonies was a useful hypothesis by giving a certain warrant to a large view of the universe, by accustoming men's minds to vast conceptions: it enabled them to form a certain notion of the coherence of various phenomena. The union of the disciples in a band, although it produced a great deal of political uneasiness, helped to convey in a definite form the sound ethical teachings of the leader of the school to a large number; and the persecution which the society suffered served a good purpose in scattering the disciples, who carried their theories with them to other regions.

His notion of the soul and of God can not be clearly determined, but even if the particulars are vague, the vastness and impressiveness are



clearly attested, and possibly the zeal and disposition that accompany the study of philosophy are as important as any other quality that it may possess. The Pythagoreans, even if they agreed that this statement was true about other systems, would, however, probably deny its applicability to themselves.

The third school of philosophy, the Eleatic, was so called from Elea, in Italy, where it especially flourished. The founder of this new system was Xenophanes, who was born at Colophon, an Ionian town in Asia, about 620 B.C. It will be noticed that it is among the Ionians that the early philosophical studies began. Thales and his followers belonged to Miletus, Pythagoras was from Samos, an Ionian island, and Xenophanes, besides being an Ionian by birth, found a hearing in Elea, which was an Ionic colony. On the other hand, it was the Dorians who formed the adherents of Pythagoras.



XENOPHANES OF ELEA.

The great contribution of Xenophanes to philosophy was his conception of one single god, far above all human limitations, controlling everything by his power. This view naturally met with great opposition from the polytheistic Greeks, and in his elegies, to which reference has been made (see p. 186), he denounced severely the current anthropomorphism. The seed which he sowed in his statement of the unity of God was further developed by his disciple Parmenides, of Elea, who flourished about the beginning of the fifth century before Christ. Like Xenophanes, he gave utterance to his philosophical conceptions in a poem, of which fragments have come down to us. He continually affirms that existence *is*, and that non-existence is not, that it can not be conceived of as existing, for thought is the same as being. He goes on to show that what is, can not come into being or go out from being: there is then no process of becoming, as some philosophers taught. The true nature of things may be solved by thought rather than by observation, which rests on the fallible evidence of the senses. The doctrines of Parmenides were defended by Zeno, of Elea, who was born about 490 B.C. He endeavored to defend his master by showing that the opposing views led to absurdity. The paradoxes that he invented still survive in the familiar proof that Achilles can not overtake the tortoise; that a flying atom is at rest, for in every moment of time it occupies but one place, etc. Melissus of Samos tried to support Parmenides by direct proof. Doubtless the arguments of these men paved the way for the later discussions of the Sophists.

That there was opportunity for argument is very certain, for philos-



ophy would be unrecognizable if it did not present to the world the spectacle of absolutely contradictory views stoutly upheld by equally doughty antagonists. What Parmenides called wild absurdity was the very central truth of all things in the system of Heraclitus, of Ephesus, who lived a few years earlier. He is known to posterity, that always likes to condense its knowledge into the most portable form, as the weeping philosopher, but his writings appear to justify one in thinking that he was more likely to inspire than to shed tears. Homer and Archilochus, he said, ought to be whipped out of public meetings. Much learning, he maintained, does not teach reason, else it would have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras, Xenophanes and Hecataeus. The text of Mr. Matthew Arnold's lecture on Numbers might have been his statement that "the many are bad and the good are few." He opposed the Eleatic school by asserting that nature, the universe, was a continuous process of change: everything was forever becoming. In seeking for the primal element of the world, he separated himself as far as possible from the Ionic physical philosophers, by naming fire as the primal essence. In some way water is condensed from fire, and earth from water. Then it turns again through water to fire, whence it again repeats the same step in a series of endless revolutions. Heraclitus would certainly not weep if he could read some books of modern science, and perhaps a wan smile would flicker over his face when he recalled his statement that war was the father and king of all things. He would be prepared to believe in the struggle for existence.

A little later was Empedocles of Agrigentum, in Sicily, who was born about 500 B.C. The story of his life is in great measure a collection of wild legends that ascribe to him magical powers such as gathered about certain mediæval philosophers. It is said that he claimed the power of controlling rain and drought, of providing immunity from the decay of old age, of checking disease, etc. His death is said to have been as strange as his life: according to one tradition, he was translated from the earth like a divine being; according to another, the basis of Mr. Matthew Arnold's Empedocles on *Ætna*, he flung himself into the crater of *Ætna*. He left a statement of his philosophical creed in his poem concerning Nature, of which considerable fragments have come down to us, thus imitating Xenophanes and Parmenides, who naturally adopted this form of expression in the absence of any literary prose. The poem of Empedocles was much admired in antiquity: Aristotle called it Homeric, and Lucretius praised it warmly, as something nearly divine. What is left, however, fails to arouse the enthusiasm of modern readers to anything like the same extent. His belief, which falls half-way between those of the Eleatic and Ionian

schools, was that the material principles or "roots" of things were the four elements, earth, water, air, and fire, which were controlled by two abstract forces, a uniting love and a dispelling hate, which prevailed at different times. Thus, it will be noticed, he added earth to the materials already suggested by his various predecessors. The confusion between the opposing forces of love and hatred, and their mutual hostility, brought him to a position not wholly unlike that which has been defined as an early presentiment of the doctrine of evolution. This was, however, not so much an exact statement as a taunt from the opponents of Darwin, who contended (1) that his theories were not true, and (2) that they were trite, as was shown by the number of his unsound predecessors.

Empedocles further maintained that we know the material and ideal elements of things through like material ideal elements that compose our minds, fire by fire, water by water, and so on; thus, the processes of thought were materialized into the action of physical elements. Indeed, like many of his predecessors, Empedocles worked in the line of physical rather than of philosophical research.

## II.

Another late and important school of philosophy was that of the Atomists, which was founded by Leucippus and further developed by Democritus. Of Leucippus very little is known. Democritus was, according to his own statement, forty years younger than Anaxagoras, of whom mention is made later. Their theory placed as the center of all things, the *full* and the *void*; the first representing being, or something, while the other is identified with not-being, or nothing. Everything which is, consists of primal, indivisible particles or atoms, differing from one another only geometrically, by form, position, and arrangement. Fire and soul, they maintained, were composed of round atoms. Sensation is due to material images issuing from objects and reaching the soul through the senses. The soul is the noblest part of man, and the highest good is happiness.

While our definite information regarding all these philosophers is of the most meager kind, and is moreover injured by the fact that it comes to us mainly from Aristotle, who held very different views, it is yet impossible not to be struck by the importance of many of these early contributions to the subject. Especially is this the case in considering the philosophy of Democritus, whom the ancients regarded as the peer of Plato in respect of the simplicity and eloquence with which he expounded his views. We have left the merest fragments of his work,



but this seems to have covered a vast mass of subjects, especially in physics, and certain points may be gathered from two or three sentences of his. One, for example, is the famous statement that nothing comes from nothing and can return to nothing, which is one of the fundamental principles of modern physics, as indeed it was unanimously held by all the early Greek philosophers that matter was eternal. Equally significant is another utterance: nothing happens by accident, but everything happens from some reason and by necessity, a principle that forbids the formation of hypotheses that require miracles to explain obscurities. "It is only in the mind that sweetness and bitterness, heat and cold, and color exist; nothing actually exists but the atom and the void," is again a momentous statement of the impossibility of knowing the essences of things; and in further developments of his thought we find evidence of the formation of the doctrine of something very like the modern notion of evolution, as we find it stated by Empedocles.

While the mainspring of this earlier philosophy was physical study, it was of course not without reference to ethics, and here it taught a philosophy of happiness, of moderation, of peace. It was materialism that he taught, and materialism has been as much of a by-word as liberty, or reform, or anything else that has attacked people's prejudices, and the most important work of the Greek philosophers was in the direction of inculcating spiritualism; but even in the heap of ruins that alone is left of the work of Democritus we may find the stamp of a great thinker, just as in a bit of architectural ornament it may yet be possible to detect the grace and beauty that went to the decoration of a whole city. Enough is left, at any rate, to convince us of a great ferment of thought and of vast theories, and to show that here, as everywhere, the Greek has been before us.

Anaxagoras, of Clazomena in Asia Minor, was born about 500 B.C.; he explained the universe as the product of an indefinite number of primitive substances, called by him the seeds of things, which under the influence of the divine mind grew from chaos into order and produced the world. Thus, it will be remarked, he kept touch with the atomists; and if he gave an unprecedented authority to Reason, or Nous, this was not yet so much a separate controlling power as a beneficial principle exerting itself not by choice, but by inherent virtue. It is interesting to notice that Anaxagoras, who lived for thirty years in Athens and was a friend of Pericles, incurred the hostility of the Athenians by his studies. To be sure, other causes led to this condition of things: the opposition of a good part of the public did not dare to express itself openly against the great statesman, and hence



contented itself by wounding him through his friends. Phidias was arrested on a charge of impiety, and died in a prison within the city which he had helped to make immortal; and a decree against "astronomers and atheists" was evidently aimed at Anaxagoras. At any rate, such was his interpretation of it, and he withdrew to Lampsacus, where he passed the remainder of his life. The pretext for the persecution was readily found in the philosopher's conception of a ruling reason, a conception that it was difficult to harmonize with the current theology, and his interest in astronomy was not a thing to endear him to the Athenians, who had a keen admiration for their own intelligence, and little sympathy for scientific study. We have seen how Aristophanes derided it, and even Socrates regarded it as at the best a waste of time, and probably as tainted by impiety. Moreover, the sun and moon still inspired much of the awe of the earlier Nature-worship, and the scientific statement that these objects were not divine beings, but bodies shining by original or reflected light, and so not wholly unlike the earth, sounded to the Athenians as something like blasphemy. We must remember, too, that the superstitions of the Athenians were not peculiar to the time of St. Paul. We are so accustomed to the lavish adulation of the people of this city that we are led to regard them as miracles of tolerance and ripe intelligence, and to forget that their great men were the exception, and had perpetually to struggle against the conservatism and bigotry of the majority. Moreover, even an earnest love of freedom did not necessarily mean toleration any more than it did among the Puritans in England or America, and that intellectual and artistic enthusiasm do not assure immunity from bigotry is a lesson as common in history as in private life. The skeptical teachings of the Sophists were the privilege of but a few; the homogeneousness of Athenian society, which had been so important an element in its earlier greatness, was destroyed after the Peloponnesian War, and the expensiveness of the lessons of these costly teachers must have helped to divide society, as it is now divided in civilized races, into two distinct classes, the learned and the unlearned. Possibly a vague feeling of indignation with this partition counted for much of the wrath of Socrates and Plato with the detested Sophists. The populace did not share the aristocratic privilege of learned skepticism, but clung to the ancient religions, and with renewed zeal in the days of Athenian adversity. Even apart from this influence, there was the strong historical value of mythology to which the Athenians were never tired of referring. Isocrates, like all the orators, uses as a foundation for his advice the legendary stories that delighted the Athenians; we have seen Æschines teaching the mythology to Philip, and a system that ignored this influence was sure to

be detested by many of them. They had no education that prepared them for such abstract notions, and the consciousness of their own intellectual superiority only hardened them against it. Consequently we see here the same intolerance that in a few years was to demand the sacrifice of Socrates, and it was under these difficulties that philosophy began to make itself felt in Athens. Perhaps this intolerance of science has had a more lasting effect than could have been imagined at the time or than has been thought since.

Yet it must not be supposed that all these prejudices succeeded in closing Athens against the new learning, for nothing could be further from the truth. Pericles, as we have seen, was a friend of the philosophers and interested in their favorite study, and it speedily secured a place in this center of all intellectual interest. The natural sciences, too, began to be cultivated with interest and attention, for the eager minds of the Athenians could not remain indifferent to what was exciting the rest of the Hellenic world. Their city, then, became the home of philosophy; its leaders assembled there from all quarters,—the pupils of Parmenides and Empedocles, the Sophists, all who were sowing the seeds of abstract thought,—and, by their mutual attrition and instruction, combined to form varied elements into a single vaster whole. Obviously what issued from these various and at times conflicting causes was the natural resultant of the separate forces, and in the remoteness of the later philosophy from natural science, as well as in the nearly exclusive prominence given to pure thought as a means of establishing philosophy, it may be possible to trace the influence of the intellectual subtlety of the ingenious Athenians. For them the exercise of the intellect was the highest privilege of man, and especially its exercise in ingenuity. Their active intelligence found the keenest delight in theorizing, discussing, arguing about any conceivable question, and from the moment that Athens acquired the intellectual leadership, philosophy lost its connection with physics and dealt with psychology and ethics. The Sophists who aided this change did not accomplish it by making over the Athenians; they simply turned away from the contradictory explanations of their predecessors and sought to find in men's minds the foundations of the laws governing human duties and actions. In so doing they moved in harmony with the general modification that we have seen illustrated in the literature. The whole tendency of the time was toward the perception of the importance of the human mind. We see Æschylus filling his plays with supernatural beings who control the whole action; while Sophocles deals almost entirely with human beings and human actions, and in Thucydides, when compared with Herodotus, we perceive how much more attention he pays to men and



the consequences of their deeds than to the interference of the gods. Indeed, it would be easier to go further, and to say that in every period of great intellectual excitement the advance consists in a distinct recognition of the importance of the individual; it was so in the Renaissance and in the Romantic movement. In ancient Hellas the change was furthered by the influence of Athens, where the social habits of the people, their unending arguments, their interest in bright talk, as they helped the development of the drama, also brought philosophy out of the region of remote studies into that of oral discussion. Under the altered conditions the new art of rhetoric became inextricably involved with philosophy, which promised to unfold all its secrets to the subtlest arguer. The problems of philosophy aroused the attention of all, but they were impelled to handle them in their own fashion, through discussion, and rhetoric offered them a convenient instrument in the improved dialectics. With the general growth of individualism there was an increase in the authority of men's feelings, and over these obviously persuasion was most powerful. Was not the truth, they thought, more likely to be found here than in the mysteries of nature, which not only eluded observation, but were also not to be investigated without impiety? That was a strong argument, especially with men whose religion preserved many traces of an outgrown nature-worship that in many of its forms had but little to do with morals,—little, that is to say, in comparison with Christianity and Buddhism.

### III.

The magnitude of the change which the Sophists introduced by turning their backs upon the physical investigations of their predecessors, and by abandoning the study of external nature in order to examine the spiritual qualities of men, is very evident; and among its leaders was Protagoras, who thus deserves mention as a precursor of Socrates. In his eyes matter was nothing, and, as he himself said, man was the measure of all things. This was the inspiring principle of the new philosophy, which in the hands of Socrates led to the contempt of abstract study except for purposes of rank utilitarianism, which was of vast importance in turning men's minds to ethical subjects, but was more truly a religious than a scientific movement. This was its great significance, and now what lies heavy on mankind is the enormous importance given by the Athenian philosophers, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, to words as distinguished from facts. They imagined that the existence of a word implied the existence of a thing.



with no material qualities, above and outside of all laws, in a pure vacuum. The change came, as we have seen, with the sense of the importance of the individual.

The change in philosophy introduced new complexities in the life of the Greeks, as must always be the case in every society when advancing thought compels the sundering of old bonds that are venerated as part of the inheritance from older times. These new principles attacked directly and indirectly the two fundamental notions of Greek life: the anthropomorphic conception of the deities, by substituting a representation of unlimited divine forces, of which the recognized gods were but symbols; and the political notion of the all-important state was attacked by their advocacy of a wider cosmopolitanism. The religious change we have already seen in the statement of the views of most of the philosophers already mentioned, and there are quite as many instances of the effect of philosophical reforms upon the political basis of society. Thus, to go back to the beginning, Thales of Miletus urged his fellow-countrymen in Ionia to form a senate at Teos, which should exercise control over all the twelve Ionic cities, which should be its demes, but the plan came to nothing, and they were separately overthrown by Cræsus. Heraclitus was a firm adherent of the aristocratic party in Ephesus, and although these instances merely show perhaps what course of action most commended itself to cultivated men, and do not prove any viciousness peculiar to students of philosophy, we may see in the new disposition shown by nearly all of these to leave their uncongenial home and to live in Athens, a clear proof of their indifference to the narrow conditions on which the earlier society rested. Heraclitus and Democritus both found their way to that city, which, as we have seen, immediately after the Persian wars became the intellectual and artistic center of Greece. Anaxagoras, again, made it his home for thirty years, as one of the many resident aliens, who, unburdened by political duties, and powerless to exercise any of the rights of citizenship, yet enjoyed all the social privileges of that attractive spot. How different their condition was from that of the natives may be gathered from the fact that while the murder of a citizen was a capital offense, that of a resident alien was punished only by banishment. Naturally enough the presence of these men, whose ability was notorious, aroused in time the jealousy of the Athenian citizens, and it was suspected at a very early date that they exercised a pernicious influence upon Pericles. We have seen that Anaxagoras was compelled to leave Athens by an accusation of this sort. In 411 B.C. Protagoras was accused of blasphemy, at a time when feeling was hot between the oligarchic party and the populace, and later we shall see other instances of the existence of the

same hostility, notably, of course, in the case of Socrates. Continually we shall find that the people disliked the philosophers, and although the accusation brought against these men was their dangerous influence on religion, it is yet very clear that this charge was a mere pretext, and that the animating feeling was one of political distrust and jealousy. Indeed one is tempted to conjecture that universally religious persecutions and wars are politics in disguise; certainly much might be said in defense of this view.

It is readily seen that the patriotism of Greek citizens might be easily offended by the teachings of the philosophers with their advocacy of a wide cosmopolitanism. This was the note which they all sounded. Thus, Democritus, in one of the fragments of his work that has reached us, said that the whole world was the fatherland of a sturdy soul, and this remark was often re-echoed by his successors; indeed it became a commonplace among the philosophers of both Greece and Rome. We find it attacked by Aristophanes in his *Plutus* and by Lysias in his speech against Philon, and its utterance may well have offended those who clung firmly to the conviction that the only hope for preservation lay in fidelity to the limited rule of the city. As the future history of Greece shows, the principle thus stated by the philosophers, who were merely the thinking men of the country, had to be worked out by the nation, and the result was the vast extent of Hellenic influence that survived the political decay of the country. The opposition to it only lamed the material unity of Hellas; its control of the intellectual authority of the Greeks was never impaired. Far from it, it remained one of the influences that formed an important contribution to the growth of Christianity.

Another way in which it is well to regard the influence of the philosophers is this, that their teachings and authority, as has been mentioned above, tended to the division of what had been a more or less homogeneous society into one that separated the learned from the ignorant. In the contest that is portrayed in the discussions of the orators, we find abundant evidence of the existence of a peace party that could not be aroused to interest in what seemed a futile struggle. The philosophers formed a sort of aristocratic body which asked only leisure for intellectual studies; by their side everything else seemed petty and disturbing. Opinions about these facts will differ; it is easy to mourn the apparent degeneracy of these men, and to regret that they refused to continue destructive wars, but perhaps it is better to notice how the fuller breath of a wider civilization was refusing to be held by the old bonds. The fact that the change happened is a proof that it was inevitable, and he is a bold man who dares to wish that he could make history over again. Before proceeding far, he will prob-



ably see that human affairs are very complicated things, especially when he considers how double-edged are the half-truths which are all that it is vouchsafed men to see in occasional glimpses.

This whole period was one that was beset by the most intricate problems, and the way in which their answer was determined was one of vast importance to future ages. When we remember that it is from what are called the degenerate days of Greece that the greater part of the influence of that country on later civilization is derived, we may become aware to what an extent the rhetorical way of looking at history as a picturesque object has outweighed the importance of a complete record. The brilliancy of execution has almost alone attracted historians, and after Plato and Aristotle the student's way can be made only by groping. The loss of political power has been adjudged a proper date for the interruption of all interest in this wonderful people, but it was then that they were beginning their work in Alexandria and throughout the Roman empire, laying the foundations of modern thought. Literary men have had the ear of the public, and they have naturally enough lost no opportunity of pointing out their own importance; yet the world does not live on literature alone, and when this languished, the processes of thought were not extinct; the past was breaking up and the future was forming. This may have been a silent process, but we all know of those facts which come under our own observation that it is not merely the melodramatic moments that are of importance, and this is true of everything. Charm of style is not the only element that is deserving of study.

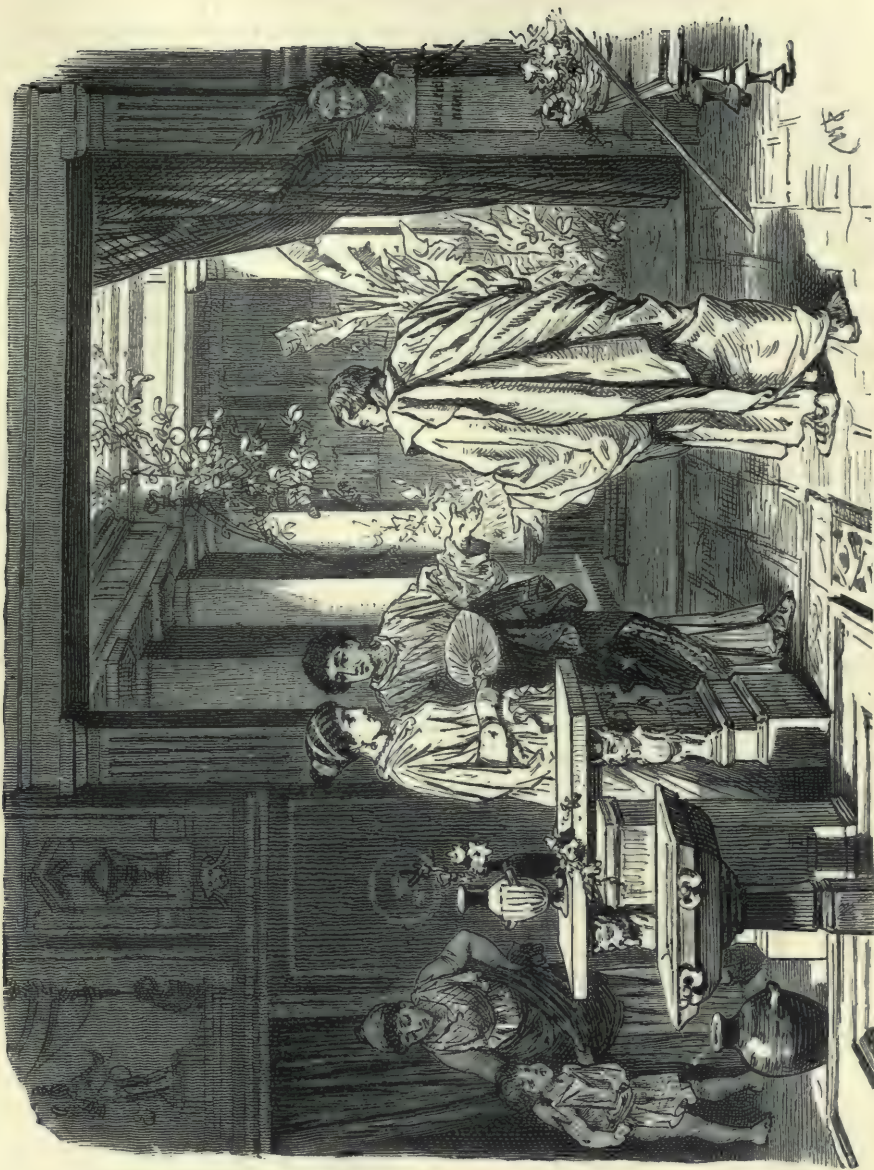
In the efforts of philosophy to establish itself we may see sufficient evidence of a bitter struggle between what seemed to be the facts of life and what must have appeared to many like an impracticable ideal. To the success of this last we may possibly ascribe some of the long-lived abstract condition of metaphysics in its remoteness from other sources of knowledge than introspection, and its contempt of science. Philosophers have never as a class thought little of themselves, and they have perhaps known a certain exultation in the reflection that the subject of their studies was something infinitely higher in their opinion than mere concrete objects which science did not despise. In fact, however, they have been repaid at times in their own coin, and have themselves suffered from the contempt which they felt for everything but their favorite study. Yet in no case is contempt a fruitful or commendable feeling, and it is the greatest glory of science that it tends to destroy the unworthy habit of drawing what may be called social distinctions in the universe which students must observe under peril of losing caste.



## IV.

It was not moral turpitude or intellectual weakness that inspired the Greeks in following a course that has been so full of influence upon modern thought ; this was rather due to a natural dissatisfaction with the crude gropings of men of science and an equally natural confidence in the excellent weapon that lay ready to hand. By the side of its apparent incompetence they could place the philosophy which seemed to offer almost unlimited power to the human intellect, in the form of an art which, it was asserted, could be taught to almost any one. If men, endowed with many brilliant qualities, asserted that they could teach virtue, it was only natural that those who were eager to learn the principles of virtue should have been attracted by these statements. Such, at least, was the case here, and the temporary success of the Sophists is as readily explicable as their subsequent failure. The new rhetoric, with its abundance of quibbles, was but a sign of the changes that they hoped to introduce. What they did was to help the modification of Greek thought regarding all the main questions of life. Religion, civil duty, patriotism, science, the whole duty of man, became the subject of perpetual discussion in the intellectual ferment that was making itself felt in Greece: Protagoras, one of the most popular, was an avowed agnostic. When he came to Athens it was at the house of Euripides that he began to read out of one of his works, and opened with these words: "I can not tell whether the gods exist or not ; life is too short for such difficult investigations." This statement at once created great excitement ; the book was publicly burned, and its circulation forbidden. The author himself left the city, and perished by shipwreck on his way to Sicily. Yet words like these from one high in authority survive public burning, and the death of the man who utters them. Gorgias went even further. He wrote a book, *On Nature or Nothing*, in which he maintained, first, that nothing exists ; secondly, that if anything does exist, we can not know it ; thirdly, that if we know it, we can not possibly communicate our knowledge to others. Prodicus and Hippias had favored scientific study ; the skepticism of Protagoras and Gorgias attacked science as much as religion, and they were the mouthpiece of a section of society that sneered at the alleged truths of science and at the old ideals which seemed to perish with the fables about the gods.

While men's interests were thus rapidly widening, it is not surprising that for a time men's hopes should have turned with something like rapture to the art of dialectics as the source from which



HOUSE-PHILOSOPHER.



true light should come. In the first place, discussion was the very life-blood of Athens; poetry and eloquence had long formed its main interests, and with these new teachers it seemed as if a solution for all problems was found which should wring from the universe its baffling secret. In the ingenuities of controversy it was hoped that a method was established that would remove all difficulties. The shattering of the old religious faith is clearly seen in the plays of Euripides, who alternates between the conflicting views of his predecessors and his contemporaries. At times he adjudges men's fate to be simply the result of their own actions, the stories of the gods he accepts at one moment to deny at the next. He disapproves of the statement that the power of prophecy exists: in a word, the old belief is crumbling like a thing outworn. While on the one hand the Greek religion was over-ripe, science had not reached sufficient maturity to stand a rigorous examination or to serve as a basis for an altered view of the universe, and neither could endure comparison with the brilliant results that promised to follow the new use of argument and discussion. Rhetorical skill easily held the first place. We have seen the practical results of the teachings of the Sophists in the brilliant prose literature of Greece, and their power as a means of culture was thought to be even greater. Consequently it developed a tendency to spin webs in the thin air, wholly removed from any solid basis, and it was this tendency which has given the Sophists their bad name. They encouraged a growth which had no roots, and although the un wisdom of this conduct is now perfectly plain, it is not necessary to suppose that it was the result of a deliberate preference of the wrong; it was a mistake, not a crime, and a mistake that arose from the exaggeration of the power of rhetoric. Much of the opprobrium that attaches to their names serves but to illustrate the long life that belongs to abuse, and many of the charges brought against them were, like much fault-finding, mere pretexts. Some hated them merely for one of the commonest causes of hatred: for teaching new things; others, for the non-performance of their brilliant promises. Yet, so confused is the action of human justice, it was their most serious foe, Socrates, who endured persecution and became a scapegoat for the whole band.



## V.

This remarkable man was born in Athens about 469 B.C. His father, Sophroniseus, was a sculptor; his mother, Phænarete, was a midwife. In his early years Socrates followed the occupation of his father, with what success we are not told, but later he abandoned that occupation to become a public teacher. That the gain of philosophy was not commonly thought to be a loss for sculpture, may be conjectured from the fact that the Graces represented in this illus-



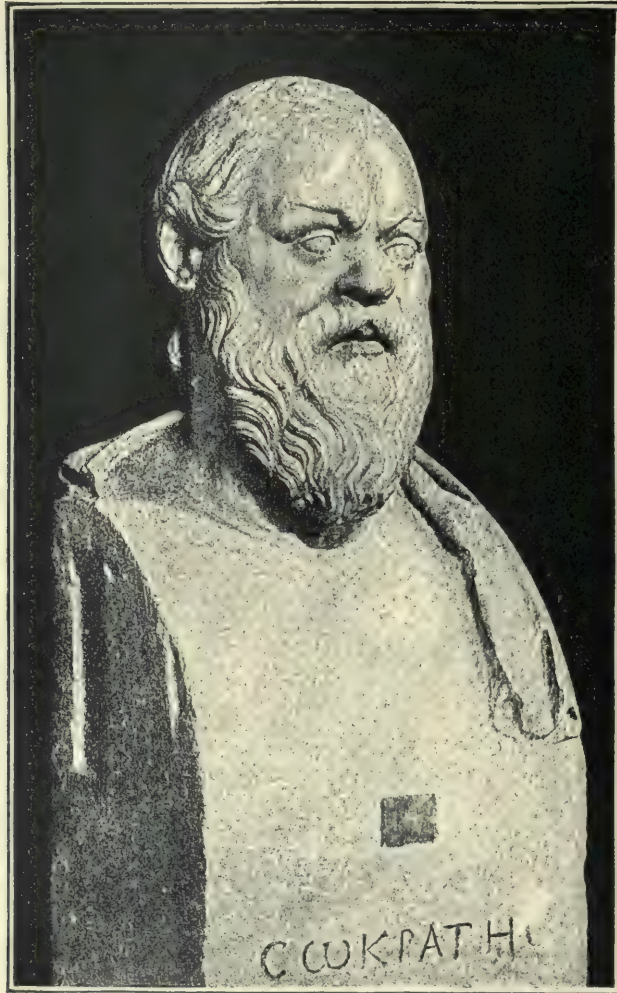
THE GRACES ASCRIBED TO SOCRATES.

tration were ascribed, whether accurately or not is uncertain, to Socrates. In person he was singularly unattractive; his rare and delicate mind was enclosed in a graceless body that reminded beholders of a satyr. Yet if he lacked beauty, he possessed strength and was capable, beyond most men, of exposure and hardship; he was tolerant of both abstinence and what others would have thought excess. He passed his entire life in Athens, except when called



away for brief seasons on military duties. He lived there peacefully enough, never taking part in any lawsuit until the one which terminated in his condemnation to death.

Of his life in Athens we know a great deal from Xenophon and



SOCRATES.

Plato, for the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon, of which mention has been made above, besides being the earliest personal memoir, is most abundant in information. It presents to us a vivid picture of Socrates in his daily life, arguing and discussing with any who cared to listen

to him. Of the method of his conversation, striking as it is, but little need be said. He was an Athenian of the Athenians, a representative of that wonderful people, who in his limitations, as in his excellence, illustrates many of their most prominent qualities. That he wrought his work by means of talk in the market-place was simply a continuation of the fixed habit of his fellow-citizens, as much as was Dr. Johnson's talk over the supper-table, although in making it the aim of his life we may perhaps suppose that Socrates was consciously reproving the Sophists for giving instruction for hire. The reports of his remarks given us by Xenophon and Plato make very clear the courtesy of the Athenians and their quickness and subtlety. The personal note of the great philosopher may be distinguished in the rigid cross-examination to which he subjected those who came in his way. This cross-examination, however, was not of his invention, although he was doubtless fully aware of its contrast to the didactic instruction of many of the Sophists and to the offers of some of their number to answer any questions that might be put to them. It was the old-time method of the law-courts which led the victim down a series of damaging admissions to a black pit of confusion and tardy remorse. It had flourished in the tragedies and now made its way into philosophy, where under the guise of simplicity Socrates would ask the most baffling questions with no other design apparent than simple curiosity. This method certainly brought philosophy down to the comprehension of the whole people instead of reserving it for the fortunate few, and by his illustrations and images, which seem actually taken from life, as if the real scenes caught his eye while he was talking, he simplified what to many must have appeared a remote and obscure subject. In a way, the talk of Socrates reminds the reader of that of Dr. Johnson, whose vivid and drastic wit in a somewhat similar way cut through pretense and exaggeration. Few other likenesses suggest themselves, for commonly the man who is busy denouncing these qualities in others is illustrating them in himself, and here the contrast between the subtle questions of Socrates and the violent affirmations of Johnson warns us against the exaggeration of points of resemblance. Yet in the provinciality of the two men it is easy to see a certain agreement, and while there are provinces and provinces, even in Athens there already existed a distinct aversion to natural science as well as to cloudy philosophy, both marked traits in Socrates. In his aim, which was to make men good citizens, we see at once the limit as well as the merit of his designs.

What he helped to do was to carry on the movement of philosophical thought toward ethics, to give it a practical bent; as Cicero said, "he called philosophy down from the heavens to earth, and



introduced it into the cities and houses of men, compelling men to inquire concerning life and morals and things good and evil." Part of the change was doubtless due to the dissatisfaction that the Athenians felt for misty thought and what seemed to them unprofitable studies.

Lucidity was the object of their whole intellectual training. By their command of it they became the chosen interpreters of the Greek people, and in the early physical philosophy they saw something that fascinated them as little as the philosophy of Hegel has ever fascinated the French. With this feeling, Socrates was forever seeking definitions from those who were preparing to enwrap him in long disquisitions, and were ready to let abundant general principles take the place of precise statement. Half of the imposing machinery of the philosophers was disabled by this ingenious attack which seemed to be merely an ingenuous defense. In the same way, by limiting the functions of philosophy to human, indeed, one might almost say, to social interests, he kept close to that side of the Athenian character which was indubitably averse to far-straying adventuresomeness, a certain philistinism, the severe might call it. The insistence upon lucidity has a tendency to clip the wings of speculation, as we may see in the history of French thought, especially in contrast with that of German philosophy.

So much at least we are justified in saying, when we notice how great was the influence of Socrates on the subsequent development of philosophy among the Athenians, how incessantly he introduced a practical test into the examination of his powerful rivals. It is sufficiently obvious that his method was not universally popular, to speak mildly, but its fruitfulness is undeniable. By bringing philosophy into line with ethics, he sobered men who were intoxicated by what they had learned from the Sophists, and by his constant application of their principles to the welfare of the state, he kept true in the main to the fundamental notions of the Greeks concerning civic duty. He did his best to adapt and correct these outside theories to possible use; they floated in the air, and he, by forcing them to acquire citizenship in Athens, gave them a place, when properly modified, in the philosophy of the world. And in the peculiar character of his work we may doubtless see an exaggeration of the quality most unlike the easy flight of the Sophists, who could easily ignore awkward and disturbing facts. The homeliness of his simplicity is a vivid exposition of the faults which he was attacking.

With what excellent effect Socrates applies his method we may see illustrated in Xenophon's account of his talk with the youthful Glauco, who attempted to address the public assembly before he was twenty

years old. Every citizen had, to be sure, the right of speaking, but idle talkers were liable to be forcibly removed by the police when it became evident that their words were vain. Glauco had suffered this ignominious expulsion more than once, but had persisted in repeating



ATHENIAN CITIZENS.

the experiment against the advice of his friends, when Socrates undertook to reason with him. After a few compliments the philosopher opened the discussion by asking Glauco a few practical questions about statesmanship. Would Glauco tell him the current revenue of Athens and whence it was derived? No, he had never examined the matter. Then perhaps he had some plan for diminishing expenses? No, he proposed nothing of the kind. But he did think that the enemies of Athens might be made to contribute to the wealth of that city. Ah, if they are going to war, Glauco can doubtless enumerate the extent of the Athenian forces? No, he has forgotten at the moment. But doubtless it is written down somewhere? No, it is not. And so Socrates goes on, dexterously permitting his interlocutor to

expose his ignorance and incompetence. What he did here with practical matters he did continually with subjects of abstract thought, cutting through idleness and vanity with his homely wit, not inflicting capital punishment on those whom he encountered, but letting them hang themselves with their own rope. All of this was far from the vague discussions of the universe and the origin and real nature of all things which had been agitating his predecessors, and Socrates further separated himself from them by his frank acceptance of the popular religion. He held that the gods were wise, beneficent beings, who had established the order of things in the universe for useful ends, that they made known their wishes through the oracles, and that they were to be worshiped by righteous living and reverence, rather than by extravagant sacrifices. The soul he looked upon as something divine in its origin and nature, and apparently he regarded it as immortal. The secret of his lessons lay in the enforcement of knowledge as the root of wise thought and wise actions. Only by knowing well what was justice, or temperance, or virtue of any sort, could one act virtuously, and the definitions he sought by first clearing away false notions, by analysis, and then synthetically he bound into one whole the truths that had been thus ascertained. The facts being thus attained, he saw to their application in conduct. Only such as had taken these necessary steps were competent to hold positions of authority. His method lay on as practical a foundation as the result; he believed that men could learn what they needed for the control of their lives from the study of their own natures. "Know thyself," already a familiar Greek maxim, received new significance at his hands: all virtue depended on this knowledge,

It is certainly curious that of all the Athenians it should have been Socrates who was picked out for death on account of dangerous and heretical notions, and when he was charged with not acknowledging the gods recognized by the state, and with introducing new demoniacal beings, it is evident that no distinction was made between his teaching and that of the Sophists. Nor is this wholly surprising: his manner of thrusting himself into attention, while the Sophists rather let themselves be sought by their pupils, brought him into greater prominence, and doubtless the public was more willing to condone offenses that produced no public scandal than such as pressed themselves every day into every one's view. Here was a man baffling and disturbing his listeners at every street-corner, talking about what the history of the world has proved to be one of the most disturbing subjects possible, that is, man's duty, and, naturally the populace would be ready to confound him with the more dangerous foes of general apathy. He put himself in evidence, as it might be said, before a public that knew



no more than that the discussion of the settled religion was pernicious. If Aristophanes in his *Clouds* could so totally misrepresent Socrates as, for instance, to imply that he dabbled in physical science, how much more could the ignorant populace repeat the error, especially when we consider its preference for a single, representative victim. Grote's ingenious defense of the Athenian public for the condemnation of Socrates amounts to this, that he had made himself an intolerable nuisance, and that it avenged by death its frequent humiliation by his subtle arguments, but this is scarcely so easy of belief as that the distinction was not clearly drawn between him and the Sophists, and that he suffered for the offenses of his worst antagonists. Then, too, it is to be remembered, great as was his opposition to them, he also taught the unwisdom of uninquiring compliance with convention and law. They eluded observation; he sought it and suffered. The story of his death will be found below, as well as extracts from his alleged defense, when Plato comes under discussion. The bare statement of the fact will suffice here, and may well serve to remind us moderns who are sometimes compared unfavorably with the Athenians, that even that wonderful people were not without their full share of philistinism, of bigotry, that is, and all the faults of narrow prejudice and harshness. Beneath the brilliant immortals was the populace that groped its way where others led, and only those were successful leaders who kept touch with the popular interests. All of these interests Socrates had offended: his disciples were found among the Thirty Tyrants; the religious party was aggrieved by every inquiry into what seemed their peculiar property; the Sophists detested him, and those who dreaded the influence of the Sophists regarded him as the most dangerous of those perverters of innocence; the conservatives looked upon him as a radical, and the radicals thought him a pernicious conservative. In short, he knew all the bitter loneliness of real independence, and paid with his life for daring to take nothing for granted.

Moreover, we must remember that what in the eyes of posterity is the greatest glory of Socrates, the fact, namely, that he was the first important man who attempted to lay the foundations of the state on a moral basis, and that he questioned the force of authority which hitherto had been held sufficient; remembering this, and his continual demand that all action and belief must rest on the conviction of truth or expediency, it is perhaps easier for us to understand the opposition to what must have seemed, because in fact it was, a very important subversion of settled and approved principles. Discipline was dangerously threatened by this correction of the old authority of the state; and it is very obvious that at any time there may arise a conflict

between moral and civic duty, if the individual refuses to act until he has determined the justice and wisdom of his orders. The appearance then of the right of personal judgment was the entrance of the small end of the wedge that was to sunder the old Greek life with its narrow exclusiveness from the broader and far more extended civilizations that were to follow. Xenophon takes care to show us how well Socrates performed such civic duties as came to him ; but the schism that his philosophy foreboded spread after his death throughout society. The old conditions were outgrown, and everywhere we find abundant testimony of their destruction. Perhaps the best expression of the new feeling is to be found in this passage from Plato's Republic (VI. 496), where Socrates is speaking of philosophers :

" Now he who has become a member of this little band, and has tasted how sweet and blessed his treasure is, and has watched the madness of the many, with the full assurance that there is scarcely a person who takes a single judicious step in his public life, and that there is no ally with whom he may safely march to the succour of the just ; nay, that should he attempt it, he will be a man that has fallen among wild beasts,—unwilling to join in their iniquities, and unable singly to resist the fury of all, and therefore destined to perish before he can be of any service to his country or his friends and do no good to himself or any one else ;—having, I say, weighed all this, such a man keeps quiet and confines himself to his own concerns, like one who takes shelter behind a wall on a stormy day, when the wind is driving before him a hurricane of dust and rain ; and when from his retreat he sees the defection of lawlessness spreading over the rest of mankind, he is well content, if he can in any way leave his life here untainted in his own person by unrighteousness and unholy deeds, and, when the time for his release arrives, takes his departure amid bright hopes with cheerfulness and security."

The echo of these eloquent words is not yet silent, and they fully express what finds corroboration in the complexity of Euripides and in the general breaking away of the old state of things. That those who condemned Socrates saw clearly these results of his teachings can not be positively affirmed ; probably they did not ; for it is hard enough for men to see what is immediately before their eyes without any foreknowledge of its remote consequences, yet a dull sense of the discord that lay between themselves and this one man was sufficient to make him detested. In behalf of those who condemned Socrates, it is well to remember that a very little compliance on his part with the humor of his judges would have saved his life, but he felt that his work was done, and by dying as he did he gave the seal of martyrdom to principles that were destined to exert an enormous influence, for the conflict between authority and right is practically endless. And it is also well to bear it in mind that the life of an atheist is often more comfortable than that of a reformer ; he who denies everything



is, as it were, a foreigner, but one who undertakes to improve us is as detestable as only our relations can be.

The success of his enemies had its usual result in the ruin of their theories. The moment when they deemed themselves victorious history names as the date of their overthrow, and it was the small state theory of government that perished when Socrates died. Henceforth cosmopolitanism is a recognized aim of the philosophers and of the thinking men in general. Athens soon ceased to be Greek and became a leading city in a wider empire.

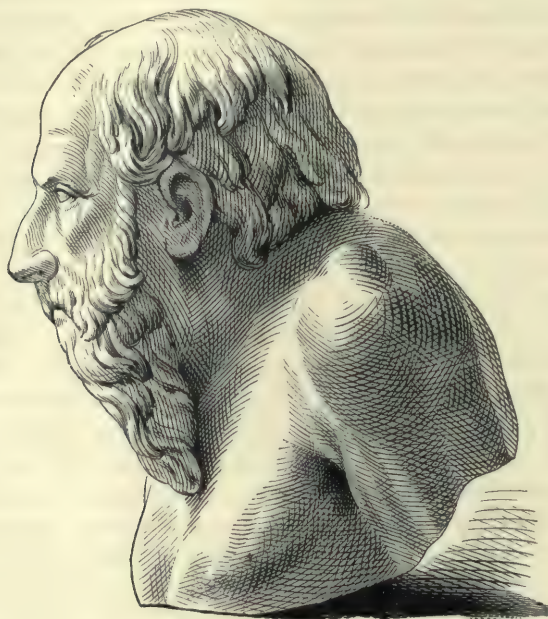
His personal followers were many. Xenophon, as we have seen, showed in his work the effect of his master's teachings; Æschines, the Socratic, as he is termed to distinguish him from the orator, and Kebes of Thebes are included among the personal friends who maintained a loyal allegiance to his memory, but the direct line of philosophic descent consists of two main schools, the Megaric or Eristic, which occupied itself mainly with dialectics and the Cynic school of Antisthenes, and the Hedonic or Cyrenaic school of Aristippus, which investigated principally ethical matters. The founder of the first school was Euclid of Megara, who, like most of the disciples of Socrates, fled from Athens on the death of their teacher. He returned to Megara and there taught his philosophy, which combined the doctrines of the Electics with those of Socrates, and endeavored to establish the existence of a single good, called intelligence, god, or reason, according to the way in which it is viewed by the mind, for it was not to be perceived through the senses. With this philosophic principle he and his followers combined many dialectic subtleties which brought them into ill repute. The most celebrated of his disciples was Stilpo of Megara, who added to the statements of Euclid a view of things rivaling that of the Cynics, namely, that the wise man was not only superior to every evil, but that he should not even feel it. Others of whom less is known were Diodorus Cronus and Philo. This Euclid is of course not to be confounded with the more famous geometrician who lived a century later.

Phædo of Elis is reputed to have established a school of philosophy in his native city, and to have taught doctrines similar to those inculcated by Euclid; of the particulars, however, only very little is known.

The Cynic school was established by Antisthenes of Athens, the son of an Athenian father and Thracian mother, who taught in a gymnasium called Cynosarges, whence the school took its name. He maintained that the only good thing is virtue, that enjoyment is baleful, and that virtue consists solely in self-control. All that it requires is Socratic force. Once attained, it is secure for all time, and all that lies vague between vice and virtue is indifferent. Thus it will be seen



that it is simply the ethical side of the teaching of Socrates that is developed by the Cynics. Diogenes of Sinope (414-323) who won for himself the title of the Mad Socrates, exaggerated all these theories, abandoned all the conveniences of civilization, and was glad to call himself a dog. This fantastic turn foreboded the direction the whole



DIOGENES.

movement was to take, when affectation and grotesqueness tried to wear the mantle of philosophy. Yet it bore good fruit, when stripped of its absurdities, in the later Stoicism, for underlying all its manifestations lay a deep-felt reaction against a corrupt civilization. It certainly seems not impossible that by inculcating upon its supporters entire indifference to dress, it may have had some influence in providing a uniform for the later monastic orders.

The Cyrenaic school, founded by Aristippus of Cyrene, distinguished itself from the Cynic by taking pleasure to be the aim of life. Pleasure he defined as the sensation of gentle motion; it is to be sought by the truly wise man, who, however, will not allow himself to be controlled by it. Physical and intellectual pleasures were equally esteemed, the difference between them depending on the degree and duration of each. The sage will then decide for himself, and remain always the master rather than the slave of his pleasures. Our knowl-

edge, he also held, is confined to our sensations. Not unnaturally this school had a considerable following; besides the daughter and grandson of Aristippus, we hear of Theodorus, the atheist, as he was called, who praised a constant cheerfulness; of his pupils, Bio and Euhe-merus, who said that the worship of gods arose from the admiration for great men, whose fame acquired a vagueness that fitted them for mythological fables; Hegesias and Anniceris. Anniceris deserves especial mention for bringing into notice the importance of sympathy for others as a means of securing personal pleasure.



MAXIMES OF THE PHILOSOPHERS AND SAGES.

## CHAPTER II.—PLATO.

I.—The Vast Importance of Plato to Modern Thought. Mr. Benn on his Inconsistencies. Platonism Not to be Defined by one Word or Phrase. II.—The Life of Plato. His Aristocratic Theories. His Political Efforts for the Regeneration of Mankind. His Journeys, etc. His Work; the Nature of the Dialogues. III.—His Accounts of Socrates; the *Apology* and the *Crito*. Extracts. IV.—The General Dialogues: Their Literary Charm. Various Ones Analyzed: the *Charmides*, *Lysis*, *Protagoras*, *Ion*, *Lesser Hippias*, *Meno*. V.—The *Symposium* and the *Phædrus*. The *Gorgias*. The *Cratylus*. The *Timæus*, etc. VI.—The *Republic*, its Utopianism and Aristocratic Longings. The Generally Accepted Notion of Platonism. His Theory of Ideas. VII.—His Followers, and his Influence, and his New Foundation for Ethics. VIII.—Extract.

### I.

IN the end of the preceding chapter we have seen the divisions of those followers of Socrates who, according to their lights, carried on the instruction of their greater teacher, but it was not from them that his influence was to spread throughout the world so much as from Plato, the most illustrious of his followers, one of the few men who have left upon thought a lasting mark. The other pupils were called the imperfect or one-sided Socraticists; it was Plato who developed the philosophy of Socrates into something that those who listened to the latter in the market-place could not have imagined possible.

It is speaking within bounds to say that no single writer has exercised more influence on thinking men of ancient and modern times than Plato. Yet his influence was not immediate; both he and Aristotle set the mark too high for the divergent forces of Greece, and it was not till after the beginning of the Christian era that what was called Neo-Platonism arose and exerted an influence on the thought of the early Fathers. Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, St. Augustin and others regarded Plato as inspired or as familiar with inspired truth, and they all welcomed him as an ally who could help to develop the great spiritual forces that formed part of the foundations of the modern world, and already some of its most important elements had been drawn from him. The vision of the Church as the sign on earth of the kingdom of heaven did not bear an accidental likeness to Plato's *Republic*. Throughout the Dark Ages Plato's fame was dimmed, but whenever men have turned their eyes to the light it has been Plato on whom men have depended as an



interpreter of higher truth. It was so at the time of the Renaissance, when his works were studied with the utmost enthusiasm; and the last hundred years, aroused by the no less important excitement of what is vaguely called the Romantic movement, have known a revival of interest in his work after the brief eclipse of curiosity in the eighteenth century.

Yet, as Mr. A. W. Benn has well said in his "Greek Philosophers" (i. 172 *et seq.*), "No philosopher has ever offered so extended and vulnerable a front to hostile criticism. None has so habitually provoked reprisals by his own incessant and searching attacks on all existing professions, customs, and beliefs. It might even be maintained that none has used the weapons of controversy with more unscrupulous zeal. And it might be added that he who dwells so much on the importance of consistency has occasionally denounced and ridiculed the very principles which he elsewhere upholds as demonstrated truths. . . . His system seems at first sight to be made up of assertions, one more outrageous than another. The ascription of an objective, concrete, separate reality to verbal abstractions is assuredly the most astounding paradox ever maintained even by a metaphysician. Yet this is the central article of Plato's creed. That body is essentially different from extension might, one would suppose, have been sufficiently clear to a mathematician who had the advantage of coming after Leucippus and Democritus. Their identity is implicitly affirmed in the *Timæus*. That the soul can not be both created and eternal; that the doctrine of metempsychosis is incompatible with the hereditary transmission of mental qualities; that a future immortality equivalent to, and proved by the same arguments as, our ante-natal existence, would be neither a terror to the guilty nor a consolation to the righteous,—are propositions implicitly denied by Plato's psychology. Passing from theoretical to practical philosophy, it might be observed that respect for human life, respect for individual property, respect for marriage, and respect for truthfulness, are generally numbered among the strongest moral obligations, and those the observance of which most completely distinguishes civilized from savage man; while infanticide, communism, promiscuity, and the occasional employment of deliberate deceit, form part of Plato's scheme for the redemption of mankind. . . . Finally, from the standpoint of modern science, it might be urged that Plato used all his powerful influence to throw back physical speculation into the theological stage; that he deliberately discredited the doctrine of mechanical causation which, for us, is the most important achievement of early Greek thought; that he expatiated on the criminal folly of those who held the heavenly bodies to be, what we now know them to be,

masses of dead matter with no special divinity about them ; and that he proposed to punish this and other heresies with a severity distinguishable from the fitful fanaticism of his native city only by its more disciplined and rigorous application."

This formidable indictment, which, it should be said, is made by a most friendly hand, makes very clear the impossibility of describing Platonism as a rounded scheme which offers a consistent explanation of the universe or of social phenomena. The effort has been made, but with what success the long list of diverse opinions will show. It is naturally not so much Platonism as a system, but Plato as a man, that has inspired generations of liberal thinkers ; indeed, the variety of its tendencies has helped to inspire the supporters of the most conflicting theories ; it has been a sort of neutral ground from which adherents of the most opposite views could draw the munitions of war. Yet there is a likeness in the methods, however different may have been the designs of the various partisans. What then were the qualities of this wonderful man ?

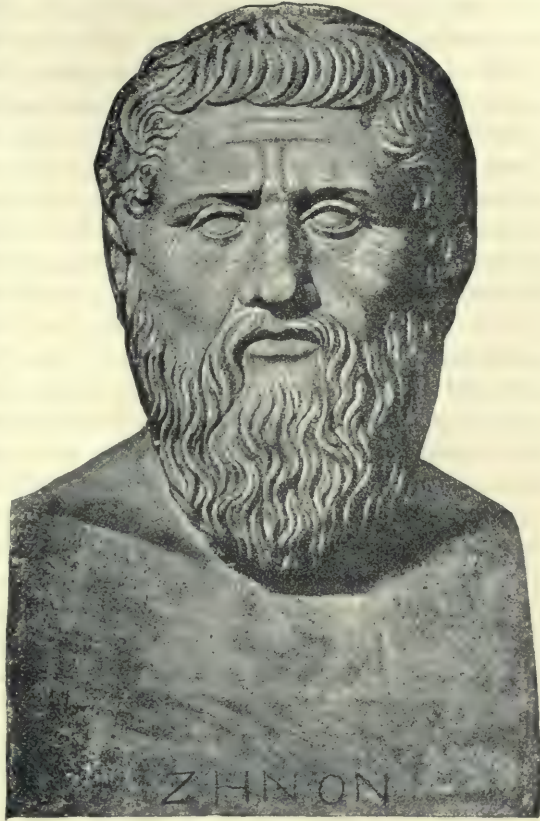
## II.

Plato, or Aristocles, to give him his real name, was born, probably in Athens, in 427 or 428 B.C., of an honorable family. His father was a descendant of Codrus, the last of the kings of Athens, and on his mother's side he was related to Solon. For seven or eight years Plato was a pupil of Socrates, and after his teacher's condemnation he fled from Athens and with many of his companions went to Megara, to the house of Euclid, for protection. What next happened is uncertain ; some assert that he took a long journey, to Cyrene, Egypt, and possibly to Asia Minor, although it may be that part of this time was spent in Athens. When about forty years old he made a visit to the Pythagoreans in Italy, and thence he went to Sicily, where he became a friend of Dio, the brother-in-law of Dionysius I., the tyrant. Here we are at least on a solid ground of fact ; his other journeys partake of the nature of romances invented to explain certain admixtures of foreign learning in his lessons ; thus, the early Fathers explained his supposed agreement with the Old Testament as a part of his acquisitions from Egypt. It is to be remembered, however, that at this time Athens was the clearing-house for the whole intellectual world, that philosophers of all sorts met there for exchange and discussion of their ideas, and that his knowledge of other views does not require the hypothesis of his travels by its explanation. In Sicily he fared but ill ; his frank speech soon aroused the anger of Dionysius, who, in his wrath, had him sold as a prisoner of war in Ægina then fighting with



Athens. The story runs that he was rescued from this miserable condition by Anniceris, the philosopher, who practiced here the sympathy that he taught in his lessons.

We have already seen in the words of the philosophers evidence of their tendency to separate themselves from the narrow limits of civil life, and in Plato's endeavors to put his political theories in practice in the realm of the Sicilian tyrants, we may find another example of this enlargement of the functions of their favorite study. It was in large states, with monarchical tendencies, that they hoped to exercise an influence denied them by the Athenian democracy, and since philosophers could not become kings they thought to accomplish their efforts by making kings philosophers. As Plato said in the Republic (V. 473):



PLATO.

“ Unless it happens either that philosophers acquire the kingly power in states, or that those who are now called kings and potentates be imbued with a sufficient measure of genuine philosophy, that is to say, unless political power and philosophy be united in the same person, most of those minds which at present pursue one to the exclusion of the other being peremptorily debarred from either, there will be no deliverance, my dear Glauco, for cities, nor yet, I believe, for the human race ; neither can the commonwealth, which we have now sketched in theory, ever till then grow into a possibility and see the light of day. But a consciousness how entirely this would contradict the common opinion made me all along so reluctant to give expression to it : for it is difficult to see that there is no other way by which happiness can be attained by the state or by the individual.”



The only countries where the proper conditions seemed to exist were Syracuse and Macedonia, and it was to these that the philosophers turned their attention. Socrates himself had been invited to the Macedonian court by Archelaus, but he was too good an Athenian to think of going away, although, as has been said, Euripides and Agathon were more compliant. Plato, too, had received an invitation thither, but it was to Sicily that he turned his steps; yet in spite of these refusals the Macedonian rulers appear to have sought and obtained the aid of the philosophers, partly, doubtless, from a desire to introduce civilization into their ruder country, and partly, too, as was the case in the eighteenth century with Catherine of Russia, from a politic desire to make use of their ready and powerful influence. Thus we shall see later how Aristotle came into the employment of the Macedonians. It is obvious that these close relations between the philosophers and the most powerful monarchs of the time could not have been without effect on the political development of Athens, and that they also express a new perception of the widening civilization that began to show itself. The frequent effort of the philosophers of very different calibre to describe an ideal state proves that they thought that the old order of things was at an end, and this was not disproved by the fact that in their lives they were not political conspirators or agitators. It is not merely what men say or do that has influence on posterity, but their general positions with regard to the world; and even if the philosophers can not be detected intriguing with the Macedonian party, their contemplation of an aristocratic superiority to low civic cares and their serene hope of an altered political condition in which wisdom should alone be honored, all bore fruit in the general indifference to patriotic teaching in Athens and in the establishment afterwards of Alexandria, which, as we shall see, at once became the metropolis of all the learning of the world, the great center of every branch of education. It is obvious that it could not have acquired this prominence without previous preparation, and it may not be unfair to suppose that this preparation was going on, possibly unconsciously, in the minds of the philosophers, who were undeniably the intellectual leaders of their time.

A similar argument may be applied to the transformation of religious belief. No one will deny that here the influence of the philosophers was very great. Not one of them shared the popular views concerning the gods; all, without exception, Academicians, Peripatetics, Stoics, and Epicureans, agreed that the stories that were told about and were accepted by the ignorant rabble were but myths, to which some ascribed a higher spiritual significance than did others. And for the educated classes the teachings of philosophy ever more

and more took the place of the old religion. Yet we do not detect the philosophers blaspheming, burning the temples, or desecrating the images of the gods. Their influence worked more subtly, and with more effect, as all serious thought must work even if it is so carefully guarded that its expression shall nowhere appear iconoclastic. Socrates, we are accustomed to say, was unjustly put to death for destroying the belief in the gods, and it is true that he strongly urged that they be worshiped, but it is quite as true that the philosophy which was inspired by him overthrew the old religion among educated men. This result was latent in the very condition of intellectual curiosity which animated him; and as to the political views of the philosophers, the later cosmopolitanism was already implied in their theories about an improved state. Their acceptance of the small Greek city as their ideal is no more answer to this, than their avowed reverence before the deities; the change that they desired involved the larger conditions.

In 387 or 386 B.C., Plato, once more in Athens, opened his famous school in the Academy. The Academy was situated just outside Athens, less than a mile from the city gate, near the hill of Colonus celebrated by Sophocles; the place got its name from the old hero Academus, of whom it was said that when Castor and Polydeuces invaded Attica to set free their sister Helen, he told them the place where she was kept in concealment. This assertion seems to us to have much more the nature of an anecdote than that of a fact, but it was sufficiently authoritative at the time of the Peloponnesian war to save the region from ravage. In time a gymnasium for the instruction of youth was built here, and called the Academy. These gymnasia contained an enclosure where grew trees as in a college yard, and it was in these groves that Plato, who lived in the neighborhood, taught philosophy to a number of enthusiastic pupils for nearly twenty years. In 367 B.C. he made another journey to Syracuse, in Sicily, to visit the court of the second Dionysius, who had succeeded to power, and still retained all a crown-prince's enthusiasm for the studies of his youth. Dion, the young tyrant's uncle, encouraged the new ruler, and for a time apparently there was a distinct promise that philosophy should be brought to a practical application in affairs of state. Plato had a brief taste of the sweets of popularity in this court; but soon the fashion turned, Dion was banished, all hopes of reformation disappeared, and Plato returned to Athens with his theories still untested and Syracuse not made over anew. A few years later, undismayed by his previous failures, he was again in Syracuse trying to effect a reconciliation between Dion and Dionysius, but without success, and the rest of his life, some twenty years, for he died in 348 or 347 B.C., was spent in impart-



ing philosophic instruction and in composing his dialogues. Yet a change was making itself felt : Aristotle was acquiring prominence as a rival who was at the same time an opponent. Before he died he appointed his nephew, Speusippus, the head of the Academy, judging him the most worthy to carry on his teaching.

For a long time Plato was regarded as a model of personal beauty, although this reputation rests on a slenderer basis than it did before one of the busts supposed to portray him was discovered to be a representation of young Dionysius. In his youth he was a writer of verses, but when he became interested in philosophy he burned the tetralogy that he had written, devoting himself to austerer studies. Yet austerity is in no way a characteristic of Plato, and though it is by no means impossible that his poetry may have belonged to the same category as Socrates' statues, his prose has a charm that has been a large factor in the influence of this writer, who combines wit, eloquence, and grace with a poetical quality, after a fashion that one is safe in saying has never been equaled. Byron wrote to a friend, who had been praising his *Don Juan*, that there was no poem in the world of which one-half was good, that such approbation could be given only to detached passages of the work of the most famous poets. The same thing is true of most prose, and Plato's often flags. It contains sandy tracts in which jewels are half-hidden, and some where there are no jewels ; but his best is most marvelous in its grace and richness.

The form that he chose for imparting his instruction to readers was that of the dialogue, which thus gave the most vivid representation of the conversations by which doubtless he himself, as certainly his master Socrates, taught philosophy. Moreover, the masterly skill with which he handles this form of composition makes it clear that he took possession of one already developed by others, and gave it the final touch of perfection, and the facts confirm this impression. Zeno, the Eleatic, had already made use of question and answer to convey instruction, and several of the followers of Socrates, besides Xenophon, had composed dialogues that should represent the method of their master, but none rivaled Plato in grandeur of conception and in literary excellence. Like his immediate predecessors, he gave Socrates the leading part in his dialogues, and in his mouth he placed all the truths of philosophy ; indeed, he drew him as philosophy incarnate.

Unfortunately there grew up around the genuine dialogues a number of imitations which are not to be readily distinguished from what really belongs to Plato, just as the works of the great masters of painting are not always to be separated from those of their disciples. Thirteen letters alleged to have been written by him from Sicily have been discarded, and many dialogues were rejected even by



antiquity ; more have shared the same fate in modern times, and the determination of what is genuine is yet far from being settled. Another subject of discussion, and one, apparently, equally interminable, is the order of their composition. That any generally satisfactory solution of either of these problems is possible, may well be doubted in view of Plato's disposition to follow an argument wherever it would lead him, without regarding consistency or that stifler of independence, a formal system of arrangement. This freedom from the customary shackles, it may be presumed, has been of the utmost service in adapting philosophy to different tastes, for few have been insensible to the varied fascinations of his style. The fact remains undeniable that these dialogues have been among the most powerful instigators of thought that the world has ever known. Scientific thought has not yet in the world's history proved nearly so fascinating as that combination of feeling, emotion, and dialectic with which these wonderful writings abound.

This quality of Plato's teaching, which has so noticeably adapted it for admiration in periods of intellectual excitement, when men were possessed by a hopefulness and enthusiasm for which perhaps they could give no satisfactory explanation, probably owed its origin in some measure to his discontent with the current sensationalism then taught by the Sophists, just as in following his own fancy, without formulating a system, he reacted from their rigid formalism. However this may be, his choice was a happy one, for from his utterances men have drawn the foundations of many schemes of the universe, exactly as from texts that have expressed discontent with things present or confidence in unknown powers, there have arisen the most complicated systems of theology. The fundamental characteristic of Plato is idealism, the enforcement, namely, of the lesson that above and beyond what we may perceive through our senses, there exist ideals which alone are true things ; all that exists is but a vague and shadowy representation of these higher truths, as they were called with but little conception of the confusion that would be wrought by this introduction of social distinctions among thoughts. Yet what becomes very clear in the study of Plato is the difference between those dialogues in which the negative spirit prevails and the composure of those who hold conventional ideas is sadly ruffled, and the others in which Plato, abandoning negation, proceeds to explicit affirmation of his own views. He first cleared the field of pretensions to knowledge, and then declared what it was that he thought to be the truth. The ingenuity with which Socrates is represented as undermining ignorance and arrogance is most noteworthy ; at times the reader almost wonders that the Athenians, when they at last had him

in their power, did not burn him at the stake or have him torn limb from limb by wild horses.

### III.

Besides the philosophical writings of Plato, there are included among the dialogues the *Apology* and the *Crito*, which serve to show forth the Socrates whom Plato adored. The *Apology* assumes to be the speech delivered by that philosopher to his accusers, yet there are no means of deciding the faithfulness of the report, although its quality agrees with what Xenophon tells us of the real speech, that if Socrates had tried at all to be conciliatory, he would have been acquitted. Whether a faithful transcript or an ingenious invention, it is a most wonderful speech, and it is hard to doubt that some, if not the greater part, of the words of Socrates must have been recorded here. The defense begins with a modest denial of the possession of eloquence against which his hearers had been warned, and then follows an answer to the charges of corrupting youth and of atheism. Part of this division of the defence is taken up with a cross-examination of his accusers, who fall speedily before his easy attack. Socrates shows how naturally he has won a bad name in Athens, and explains the whole aim of his long-continued system of discovering the pretended wisdom of his fellow-citizens. He will not entreat to have his life spared; for that he thinks dishonorable. When he is convicted and it is proposed that he be condemned to death, his irony appears more fully, he declines to suggest exile as a counter-proposal, and offers a slight fine in lieu of death, a single mina, which his friends persuade him to advance to thirty minæ. When this proposal is declined and his death is voted, he points out that this punishment has no terrors for him, that he is an old man who can look for only a few years more at the best, and that death will either secure him a dreamless sleep or be the means of conveying him to the companionship of the wise and good. He also warns his judges that they will not confer any benefit upon the world by killing him, for his followers will not refrain from accusing them of injustice.

There are many reasons why I am not grieved, O men of Athens, at the vote of condemnation. I expected it, and am only surprised that the votes are so nearly equal; for I had thought that the majority against me would have been far larger; but now, had three votes gone over to the other side, I should have been acquitted. And I may say, I think, that I have escaped Meletus. Nay, I may say more; for without the assistance of Anytus and Lycon, he would not have had a fifth part of the votes, as the law requires, in which case he would have incurred a fine of a thousand drachmæ, as is evident.

And so he proposes death as the penalty. And what shall I propose on



my part, O men of Athens? Clearly that which is my due. And what is that which I ought to pay or to receive? What shall be done to the man who has never had the wit to be idle during his whole life; but has been careless of what the many care about—wealth, and family interests, and military offices, and speaking in the assembly, and magistracies, and plots, and parties. Reflecting that I was really too honest a man to follow in this way and live, I did not go where I could do no good to you or to myself; but where I could do the greatest good privately to every one of you, thither I went, and sought to persuade every man among you, that he must look to himself, and seek virtue and wisdom before he looks to his private interests, and look to the state before he looks to the interests of the state; and that this should be the order which he observes in all his actions. What shall be done to such an one? Doubtless some good thing, O men of Athens, if he has his reward; and the good should be of a kind suitable to him. What would be a reward suitable to a poor man who is your benefactor, who desires leisure that he may instruct you? There can be no more fitting reward than maintenance in the Prytaneum, O men of Athens, a reward which he deserves far more than the citizen who has won the prize at Olympia in the horse or chariot race, whether the chariots were drawn by two horses or by many. For I am in want, and he has enough; and he only gives you the appearance of happiness, and I give you the reality. And if I am to estimate the penalty fairly, I should say that maintenance in the Prytaneum is the just return.

Perhaps you think that I am braving you in what I am saying now, as in what I said before about the tears and prayers. But this is not the case. I speak rather because I am convinced that I never intentionally wronged any one, although I cannot convince you of that—for we have had a short conversation only; but if there were a law at Athens, such as there is in other cities, that a capital cause should not be decided in one day, then I believe that I should have convinced you; but now the time is too short. I cannot in a moment refute great slanders; and, as I am convinced that I never wronged another, I will assuredly not wrong myself. I will not say of myself that I deserve any evil, or propose any penalty. Why should I? Because I am afraid of the penalty of death which Meletus proposes? When I do not know whether death is a good or an evil, why should I propose a penalty which would certainly be an evil? Shall I say imprisonment? And why should I live in prison, and be the slave of the magistrates of the year—of the Eleven? Or shall the penalty be a fine, and imprisonment until the fine is paid? There is the same objection. I should have to lie in prison, for money I have none, and cannot pay. And if I say exile (and this may possibly be the penalty which you will affix), I must indeed be blinded by the love of life, if I am so irrational as to expect that when you, who are my own citizens, cannot endure my discourses and words, and have found them so grievous and odious that you would fain have done with them, others are likely to endure me. No indeed, men of Athens, that is not very likely. And what a life should I lead, at my age, wandering from city to city, living in ever-changing exile, and always being driven out! For I am quite sure that into whatever place I go, as here so also there, the young men will come and listen to me; and if I drive them away, their elders will drive me out at their desire; and if I let them come, their fathers and friends will drive me out for their sakes.

Some one will say: Yes, Socrates, but cannot you hold your tongue, and then you may go into a foreign city, and no one will interfere with you?



Now I have great difficulty in making you understand my answer to this. For if I tell you that to do as you say would be a disobedience to the God, and therefore that I cannot hold my tongue, you will not believe that I am serious ; and if I say again that the greatest good of man is daily to converse about virtue, and all that concerning which you hear me examining myself and others, and that the life which is unexamined is not worth living, you are still less likely to believe me. And yet what I say is indeed true, although a thing of which it is hard for me to persuade you. Moreover, I have not been accustomed to think that I deserve any punishment. Had I money I might have estimated the offence at what I was able to pay, and have been none the worse. But you see that I have none, and I can only ask you to proportion the fine to my means. However, I think that I could afford a mina, and therefore I propose that penalty : Plato, Crito, Critobulus, and Apollodorus, my friends here, bid me say thirty minæ, and they will be the sureties. Well, then, say thirty minæ, let that be the penalty ; and for that sum they will be ample security to you.

Not much time will be gained, O Athenians, in return for the evil name which you will get from the detractors of the city, who will say that you killed Socrates, a wise man ; for they will call me wise, even although I am not wise, when they want to reproach you. If you had waited a little while, your desire would have been fulfilled in the course of nature. For I am far advanced in years, as you may perceive, and not far from death. I am speaking now only to those of you who have condemned me to death. And I have another thing to say to them : You think that I was convicted because I had no words of the sort which would have procured my acquittal—I mean, if I had thought fit to leave nothing undone or unsaid. Not so ; the deficiency which led to my conviction was not of words—certainly not. But I had not the boldness or impudence or inclination to address you, as you would have liked me to address you, weeping and wailing and lamenting, and saying and doing many things which you have been accustomed to hear from others, and which, as I maintain, are unworthy of me. I thought at the time that I ought not to do anything common or mean when in danger : nor do I now repent of the manner of my defence, and I would rather die having spoken after my manner, than speak in your manner and live. For neither in war nor yet at law ought I or any man to use every way of escaping death. Often in battle there can be no doubt that if a man will throw away his arms, and fall on his knees before his pursuers, he may escape death ; and in other dangers there are other ways of escaping death, if a man is willing to say and do anything. The difficulty, my friends, is not in avoiding death, but in avoiding unrighteousness ; for that runs faster than death. I am old and move slowly, and the slower runner has overtaken me, and my accusers are keen and quick, and the faster runner, who is unrighteousness, has overtaken them. And now I depart hence condemned by you to suffer the penalty of death, and they too go their ways condemned by the truth to suffer the penalty of villainy and wrong ; and I must abide by my award—let them abide by theirs. I suppose that these things may be regarded as fated,—and I think that they are well. And now, O men who have condemned me, I would fain prophesy to you ; for I am about to die, and that is the hour in which men are gifted with prophetic power. And I prophesy to you who are my murderers, that immediately after my death punishment far heavier than you have inflicted on me will surely await you. Me you have killed because you wanted to escape the accuser, and not to give an

account of your lives. But that will not be as you suppose : far otherwise. For I say that there will be more accusers of you than there are now ; accusers whom hitherto I have restrained : and as they are younger they will be more inconsiderate with you, and you will be more offended at them. If you think that by killing men you can prevent some one from censuring your evil lives, you are mistaken ; that is not a way of escape which is either possible or honourable ; the easiest and the noblest way is not to be disabling others, but to be improving yourselves. This is the prophecy which I utter before my departure to the judges who have condemned me.

Friends, who would have acquitted me, I would like also to talk with you about this thing which has happened, while the magistrates are busy, and before I go to the place at which I must die. Stay then awhile, for we may as well talk with one another while there is time. You are my friends, and I should like to show you the meaning of this event which has happened to me. O my judges—for you I may truly call judges—I should like to tell you of a wonderful circumstance. Hitherto the familiar oracle within me has constantly been in the habit of opposing me even about trifles, if I was going to make a slip or error in any matter ; and now as you see there has come upon me that which may be thought, and is generally believed to be, the last and worst evil. But the oracle made no sign of opposition, either as I was leaving my house and going out in the morning, or when I was going up into this court, or while I was speaking, at anything which I was going to say ; and yet I have often been stopped in the middle of a speech, but now in nothing I either said or did touching this matter has the oracle opposed me. What do I take to be the explanation of this ? I will tell you. I regard this as a great proof that what has happened to me is a good, and that those of us who think that death is an evil are in error. For the customary sign would surely have opposed me had I been going to evil and not to good. Let us reflect in another way, and we shall see that there is great reason to hope that death is a good ; for one of two things—either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. Now if you suppose that there is no consciousness, but a sleep like the sleep of him who is undisturbed even by the sight of dreams, death will be an unspeakable gain. For if a person were to select the night in which his sleep was undisturbed even by dreams, and were to compare with this the other days and nights of his life, and then were to tell us how many days and nights he had passed in the course of his life better and more pleasantly than this one, I think that any man, I will not say a private man, but even the great king will not find many such days or nights, when compared with the others. Now if death is like this, I say that to die is gain ; for eternity is then only a single night. But if death is the journey to another place, and there, as men say, all the dead are, what good, O my friends and judges, can be greater than this ? If indeed when the pilgrim arrives in the world below, he is delivered from the professors of justice in this world, and find the true judges who are said to give judgment there, Minos and Rhadamanthus and Æacus and Triptolemus, and other sons of God who were righteous in their own life, that pilgrimage will be worth making. What would not a man give if he might converse with Orpheus and Musæus and Hesiod and Homer ? Nay, if this be true, let me die again and again. I myself, too, shall have a wonderful interest in there meeting and conversing with Palamedes, and Ajax the son of Telamon, and other heroes of old, who have suffered death through an unjust judgment ; and there will be no small pleasure, as I think,



in comparing my own sufferings with theirs. Above all, I shall then be able to continue my search into true and false knowledge ; as in this world, so also in that ; and I shall find out who is wise, and who pretends to be wise, and is not. What would not a man give, O judges, to be able to examine the leader of the great Trojan expedition ; or Odysseus or Sisyphus, or numberless others, men and women too ! What infinite delight would there be in conversing with them and asking them questions ! In another world they do not put a man to death for asking questions ; assuredly not. For besides being happier in that world than in this, they will be immortal, if what is said is true.

Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. He and his are not neglected by the gods ; nor has my own approaching end happened by mere chance. But I see clearly that to die and be released was better for me ; and therefore the oracle gave no sign. For which reason, also, I am not angry with my condemners, or with my accusers ; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good ; and for this I may gently blame them.

Still I have a favour to ask of them. When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, O my friends, to punish them ; and I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything, more than about virtue ; or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing,—then reprove them, as I have reprovèd you, for not caring about that for which they ought to care, and thinking that they are something when they are really nothing. And if you do this, I and my sons will have received justice at your hands.

The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die, and you to live. Which is better God only knows.

#### FROM THE PHÆDO.

Wherefore, Simmias, seeing all these things, what ought not we to do that we may obtain virtue and wisdom in this life ? Fair is the prize, and the hope great ! A man of sense ought not to say, nor will I be too confident, that the description which I have given of the soul and her mansions is exactly true. But I do say that, inasmuch as the soul is shown to be immortal, he may venture to think, not improperly or unworthily, that something of the kind is true. The venture is a glorious one, and he ought to comfort himself with words like these, which is the reason why I lengthen out the tale. Wherefore, I say, let a man be of good cheer about his soul, who has cast away the pleasures and ornaments of the body as alien to him, and hurtful rather in their effects, and has followed after the pleasures of knowledge in this life ; who has arrayed the soul in her own proper jewels, which are temperance, and justice, and courage, and nobility, and truth—thus adorned she is ready to go on her journey to the world below, when her hour comes. You, Simmias and Cebes, and all other men, will depart at some time or other. Me already, as the tragic poet would say, the voice of fate calls. Soon I must drink the poison ; and I think that I had better repair to the bath first, in order that the women may not have the trouble of washing my body after I am dead.

When he had done speaking, Crito said : And have you any commands for us, Socrates—anything to say about your children, or any other matter in which we can serve you ? Nothing particular, he said : only, as I have



always told you, I would have you look to yourselves ; that is a service which you may always be doing to me and mine as well as to yourselves. And you need not make professions ; for if you take no thought for yourselves, and walk not according to the precepts which I have given you, not now for the first time, the warmth of your professions will be of no avail. We will do our best, said Crito. But in what way would you have us bury you ?

In any way that you like ; only you must get hold of me, and take care that I do not walk away from you. Then he turned to us, and added with a smile : — I cannot make Crito believe that I am the same Socrates who have been talking and conducting the argument ; he fancies that I am the other Socrates whom he will soon see, a dead body — and he asks, How shall he bury me ? And though I have spoken many words in the endeavour to show that when I have drunk the poison I shall leave you and go to the joys of the blessed, — these words of mine, with which I comforted you and myself, have had, as I perceive, no effect upon Crito. And therefore I want you to be surety for me now, as he was surety for me at the trial : but let the promise be of another sort ; for he was my surety to the judges that I would remain, and you must be my surety to him that I shall not remain, but go away and depart ; and then he will suffer less at my death, and not be grieved when he sees my body being burned or buried. I would not have him sorrow at my hard lot, or say at the burial, Thus we lay out Socrates, or, Thus we follow him to the grave or bury him ; for false words are not only evil in themselves, but they infect the soul with evil. Be of good cheer then, my dear Crito, and say that you are burying my body only, and do with that as is usual, and as you think best. When he had spoken these words, he arose and told us to wait while he went into the bath-chamber with Crito ; and we waited, talking and thinking of the subject of discourse, and also of the greatness of our sorrow ; he was like a father of whom we were being bereaved, and we were about to pass the rest of our lives as orphans. When he had taken the bath his children were brought to him — (he had two young sons and an elder one) ; and the women of his family also came, and he talked to them and gave them a few directions in the presence of Crito ; and he then dismissed them and returned to us.

Now the hour of sunset was near, for a good deal of time had passed while he was within. When he came out, he sat down with us again after his bath, but not much was said. Soon the jailer, who was the servant of the eleven, entered and stood by him, saying : — To you, Socrates, whom I know to be the noblest and gentlest and best of all who ever came to this place, I will not impute the angry feelings of other men, who rage and swear at me, when, in obedience to the authorities I bid them drink the poison — indeed, I am sure you will not be angry with me ; for others, as you are aware, and not I, are the guilty cause. And so fare you well, and try to bear lightly what must needs be ; you know my errand. Then bursting into tears he turned away and went out.

Socrates looked at him and said : I return your good wishes, and will do as you bid. Then turning to us, he said, How charming the man is : since I have been in prison he has always been coming to see me, and at times he would talk to me, and was as good as could be, and now see how generously he sorrows for me. But we must do as he says, Crito : let the cup be brought, if the poison is prepared : if not, let the attendant prepare some.

Yet, said Crito, the sun is still upon the hill-tops, and I know that many a one has taken the draught late, and after the announcement has been made

to him, he has eaten and drunk, and enjoyed the society of his beloved ; do not hasten then, there is still time.

Socrates said : Yes, Crito, and they of whom you speak are right in doing thus, for they think that they will gain by the delay ; but I am right in not doing thus, for I do not think that I should gain anything by drinking the poison a little later ; I should be sparing and saving a life which is already gone, and could only despise myself for this. Please then to do as I say, and not to refuse me.

Crito made a sign to the servant, who was standing by ; and he went out, and having been absent for some time, returned with the jailer carrying the cup of poison. Socrates said : You, my good friend, who are experienced in these matters, shall give me directions how I am to proceed. The man answered : You have only to walk about until your legs are heavy, and then to lie down, and the poison will act. At the same time he handed the cup to Socrates, who in the easiest and gentlest manner, without the least fear or change of colour or feature, looking at the man with all his eyes, Echecrates, as his manner was, took the cup and said : What do you say about making a libation out of this cup to any god ? May I, or not ? The man answered : We only prepare, Socrates, just so much as we deem enough. I understand, he said : but I may and must ask the gods to prosper my journey from this to that other world — even so — and so be it according to my prayer. Then holding the cup to his lips, quite readily and cheerfully he drank off the poison. And hitherto most of us had been able to control our sorrow, but now when we saw him drinking, and saw too that he had finished the draught, we could no longer forbear, and in spite of myself my own tears were flowing fast, so that I covered my face and wept over myself, for certainly I was not weeping over him, but at the thought of my own calamity in having lost such a friend. Nor was I the first, for Crito, when he found himself unable to restrain his tears, had got up and moved away, and I followed ; and at that moment, Apollodorus, who had been weeping all the time, broke out in a loud and passionate cry which made cowards of us all. Socrates alone retained his calmness : What is this strange outcry ? he said. I sent away the women mainly in order that they might not offend in this way, for I have heard that a man should die in peace. Be quiet then, and have patience. When we heard that, we were ashamed, and refrained our tears ; and he walked about until, as he said, his legs began to fail, and then he lay on his back according to the directions, and the men who gave him the poison now and then looked at his feet and legs ; and after a while he pressed his foot hard, and asked him if he could feel ; and he said, No ; and then his leg, and so upwards and upwards, and showed us that he was cold and stiff. And he felt them himself, and said : When the poison reaches the heart, that will be the end. He was beginning to grow cold about the groin, when he uncovered his face, for he had covered himself up, and said (they were his last words) — he said : Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius ; will you remember to pay the debt ? The debt shall be paid, said Crito ; is there anything else ? There was no answer to the question ; but in a minute or two a movement was heard, and the attendants uncovered him ; his eyes were set, and Crito closed his eyes and mouth.

Such was the end, Echecrates, of our friend, whom I may truly call the wisest, the justest, and best of all the men whom I have ever known.

In the *Crito*, we have a representation of Socrates declining the offer of his friends to help him escape from prison, on the ground





DEATH OF SOCRATES.



that he would be doing wrong in breaking the laws, and that wherever he might decide to live, he would be justly regarded as a male factor who could not properly set up for a teacher of virtue.

The *Menexenos* is another unphilosophical dialogue, wherein Socrates repeats a eulogy of Athens which he says that he heard uttered by Aspasia, the mistress of Pericles.

#### IV.

In the several dialogues as we find them in Jowett's admirable translation, we shall not detect, as the reader can not be too often reminded, anything like a definite system, but rather wit, ingenuity, eloquence, and poetry, playing about a number of subjects, sometimes amazing us with a more than childlike simplicity, again taking our breath away with their sweep and boldness. The *Charmides* is a discussion of the nature of temperance, or, more definitely, moderation, that takes place between Socrates, who is represented as recounting the conversation, Charmides, Chaerephon, and Critias. There is no definition of this virtue growing out of the talk; one attempt is made after another by the secondary interlocutors, but Socrates finds a flaw in every one that is suggested, and while it is agreed that temperance is an admirable quality, yet the essential core that marks its difference from other virtues is not found. The *Laches* and the *Euthyphron* take up in a similar way courage and holiness respectively, showing the difficulty of getting any general definition of the abstract quality. In the *Lysis* there is an equal failure to define friendship. While these three dialogues are animated by a single spirit, the effort, that is to say, to clear the ground by disposing of the authority of the current confidence in the power of names to supersede intelligent comprehension, they are yet somewhat less vivid than certain other dialogues in which equally important work is done with more completeness. They are full of attractive qualities; the *Charmides* especially is rich in wit and compliment, but the *Protagoras* far surpasses them all in literary merit. Here, as often elsewhere, Socrates reports the conversation, which is mainly a discussion between Protagoras and himself on the question whether or not virtue can be taught. While this is the main subject of discussion, the controversy also plays about many subsidiary matters with the most attractive grace and eloquence. The whole dialogue is a wonderful piece of dramatic art, and the picture of the elderly Protagoras, generous and amiable, is most fascinating. He is no man of straw to be overborne by the arguments of Socrates, but a very genuine person, although he can make no showing against his formidable antagonist when the fatal hour of cross-examination comes. Yet at other moments he is

powerful and attractive, while Socrates with the incessant iteration of his questions is at times paradoxical and wearisome, although this is far from being a final criticism of his part in the dialogue, or of the upshot, so far as there is an upshot, of the talk, that virtue is knowledge.

Some of the implications of the *Protagoras* are further developed in other minor dialogues. Thus, the *Ion* treats of the nature of poetical composition and recitation. It takes its name from the Rhapsode who falls into the clutches of Socrates and is readily led to believe that his success in his art is due to inspiration. Puffed up with this belief, he avers under the ironical questioning of Socrates that his knowledge of Homer gave him the mastery of every art and thus fitted him for an appointment as general. But apart from this satire of the extreme adulation that was often expressed by his contemporaries for the works of Homer, Plato also makes it clear that he too is not unaffected by a generous enthusiasm when he states his notion that a poet composes under the influence of inspiration. The poet, he says, "is a light, and winged, and holy thing."

"These beautiful poems are not human, or the work of man, but divine and the work of God; the poets are only the interpreters of the Gods by whom they are severally possessed. Was not this the lesson which the God intended to teach, when by the mouth of the worst of poets he sang the best of songs?"

Plato's name thus lent weight to one of the most long-lived superstitions that civilization has ever known, and one that has perhaps done more than any other to separate literature from life by ascribing to it a divine origin. Curiously enough, this exaggeration of the poet's rank goes on all fours with the savage's ascription of divinity to everything that he can not understand. Later, however, we shall see that, in spite of this exaltation of poets, Plato deals out to them harder measure in his ideal state. Again, in the *Lesser Hippias*, Socrates criticises the Homeric poems while discussing the general question, whether those who err voluntarily or those who err involuntarily are the better, a matter which he fails to solve.

Most of these dialogues portray the ready downfall of the Sophists before the swift sword-play of Socrates, and in the *Euthydemus* he carries on the same warfare, which is marked by good-humored banter and indeed at times by a childish logic-chopping on the part of his antagonists that make short work of those whom Plato is always ready to portray as dangerous persons. Socrates lets it be seen how pernicious are their methods, and in what way the young could be more wisely taught. In the *Meno*, the question, Can virtue be taught?

is brought up again for discussion, with but a vague answer, that virtue comes to the virtuous by the grace of God.

## V.

The Symposium and the Phædrus contain conversations on the nature of love, that have formed the sacred books of mystics for many generations. Nowhere does Plato pour out a fuller measure of fancy, poetry, and sympathetic enthusiasm than here. The generous abundance of his ardor is almost rivalled by the richness of his literary capacity which is nowhere more marked than here. In the Phædrus, Socrates affirms the immortality of the soul in an apologue, that is interesting to posterity because it has escaped the theological petrifaction that has so often befallen the similar efforts of religious enthusiasts to portray heavenly joys. From this point the talk glides into a criticism of rhetoric, and an alternative praise of philosophy as the wiser teacher.

The Gorgias is another of the dialogues that carries the reader over a beaten track as well as into very deep waters. The talk plays about the shortcomings of rhetoric, with a most satisfactory refutation of the immortal commonplaces of worthy people that writing and speaking can and should be taught those who have nothing to say. This lesson is made clear only through long stumbling and groping that bear witness to the infancy of the art of logic, but when once stated it amounts to a serious indictment of the art that promises much and performs little. This is not all; the controversy about rhetoric is made the vehicle for the expression of far higher truths; Plato affirms the right of the private judgment concerning the beliefs of the multitude, and beneath a veil of irony he establishes three great ethical ideas: first, that it is a greater evil to do than to suffer injustice; second, that it is better to suffer for wrong-doing than not to suffer; third, that we do not what we will, but what we wish.

Praise of Plato's art is as ineffectual as praise of beautiful scenery, or of a starlit night; it is at the best but a mumbling expression of the keen delight that one feels at seeing a difficult thing well done, and here it is most interesting to notice that Plato lets part of the defense of these grand truths be made against Callicles, who represents the average man of the world, whose cleverness and acuteness have made him a fair representative of the public sentiment that rests on conventionality. Just as a modern mathematician will read the work of one of the founders of that science with intelligent sympathy, so the sneers that Callicles utters against wisdom and serious thought will echo in the heart of many worthy men of the present day, who



detest no one more than an agitator who stirs up thought concerning what it is hoped may be regarded as settled principles. And who can say what strength may not have been drawn from these golden words of Socrates:

"I tell you, Callicles, that to be boxed on the ears wrongfully is not the worst evil which can befall a man, nor to have my face and purse cut open, but that to smite and slay me and mine wrongfully is far more disgraceful and more evil; aye, and to despoil and enslave and pillage, or in any way at all to wrong me and mine, is far more disgraceful and evil to the doer of the wrong than to me who am the sufferer. These truths which have been already set forth as I state them in the previous discussion, would seem now, if I may use an expression which is certainly bold, to have been fixed and riveted by us, in iron and adamantine bonds; and unless you or some other still more interesting hero shall break them, there is no possibility of denying what I say. For what I am always saying is, that I know not the truth about these things, and yet that I have never known anybody who could say anything else, any more than you can, without being ridiculous."

It is by these magnificent aspirations of a generous soul toward truth, by thus setting high the standard which future generations must reach, that Plato has won his place among the greatest teachers that the world has ever known; and let us remember that this was attained by aspiration, not by inspiration.

In the *Cratylus* there is a long discussion about what may be called metaphysical philology, that falls out of the line of the more moving dialogues. The *First Alcibiades*—the genuineness of which, as well as of the *Lesser Hippias*, referred to above, and of the *Menexenos*, is generally doubted—contains a conversation between Socrates and Alcibiades, in which the philosopher brings his younger friend to swift confession by showing him, or rather by leading him to see, his incompetence for leadership. In the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*, Plato points out how sophists and statesmen respectively fall short of the philosopher in true wisdom; and in the *Parmenides* he disposes of some of the philosophical notions of his contemporaries. In the *Timæus* is a long and, to the eye of modern science, fantastic statement of Plato's notions regarding physiology, which is an attempt to explain the constitution of the universe by metaphysics. There is a grandeur about the whole conception, which also contains some happy guesses, but its main interest is as evidence of a remote condition of human thought when science is preceded by metaphysics; possibly the domain of metaphysics, which now seems secure in its remoteness, may in its turn become the prey of exact science. The *Timæus*, obscure as it is, and perhaps on account of its very obscurity, for a long time controlled the early gropings of scientific thought and

brought down, it may be, to a late period the imaginings of the early Pythagoreans, which represent even the hard and fast science of mathematics in its metaphysical stage. The *Theatetus*, again, contains a long philosophical conversation concerning knowledge, while in the *Philebus* it is pleasure that is the subject of the discussion. Yet most of these dialogues are valuable mainly for the light that they throw on the inevitable floundering of men who are groping toward metaphysical clearness and have not yet learned the rudiments of logic. Moreover, the grace and dramatic vividness of what are apparently the earlier dialogues are lacking in these severer studies.

## VI.

This difference is more clearly seen when we compare the early *Republic* with the later *Laws*. The *Republic* is perhaps the best known of the writings of Plato; it offers the reader a practical application of many of the separate theories of the rest of the dialogues. That this concentration of his hopes and plans took the form of a reconstitution of the state makes it clear that the rehabilitation of the government had for a long time been the subject of many thinkers' meditations. Not only is it true in general that a question is never answered until it is asked, but in this particular case we know that the possible regeneration of Athens had been a widely studied problem. The *Birds* and the *Ecclesiazusæ* of Aristophanes, with their derision of fantastic projects of improvement, show this, and Xenophon's advocacy of the Lacedæmonian system of government is a further proof of the general interest in the subject. Then the political disturbances in Athens at about the end of the Peloponnesian war are unmistakable examples of the prevailing discontent with democracy. Plato had certainly reasonable grounds for indignation with the populace for their condemnation of Socrates, and throughout his work we find very sufficient instances of his discontent with his contemporaries. This point of view was that of an aristocrat with great contempt for the populace—

—"who are unacquainted with wisdom and virtue, and who spend their time in perpetual banqueting and similar indulgences, are carried down, as it appears, and back again only as far as the midway point on the upward road; and between these limits they roam their life long, without ever overstepping them so as to look up towards, or be carried to, the true Above: and they have never been really filled with what is real, or tasted sure and unmingled pleasure; but, like cattle, they are always looking downwards, and hanging their heads to the ground, and poking them into their dining-tables, while they graze and get fat and propagate their species; and to satiate their greedy desire for these enjoyments, they kick and butt with



hoofs and horns of iron, till they kill one another under the influence of ravenous appetites."

These words are placed by Plato in the mouth of his ideal Socrates, in the Republic, but the real Socrates had much more confidence in the Athenians, of whom he said that if they went wrong, the fault lay in their leaders.

Plato had seen the decay of popular government, the wreck of an oligarchy in Athens, and the abomination of despotism in Sicily; his sole hope lay in the careful training of a few intelligent young men; the masses he regarded as the instigators of all evil. His denunciations of Sophists and poets were consistent parts of his general contempt for the populace. Athens was enfeebled, and the old energy which had been employed in defending its imperial powers was now wasting itself in private litigation and excessive legislation. Almost every matter was finally settled in the courts of law, and to acquire any influence before these it was necessary to acquire a certain mastery of oratory, which was communicated by the Sophists, who affirmed that their new art of rhetoric took the place of all other education. The poets, too, were always busy composing or repeating discreditable myths about the gods, which excited the wrath of Plato, and he was furthermore indignant with them for their inability to explain their own work, and for their persistent imitation of one another. The fact that they too claimed a sort of omniscience, as did the Sophists, aroused Plato's jealousy of their influence, especially since their success crowded out the claims of his philosophy for recognition. The love of higher things, which was the basis of his teaching, could only be comprehended by the few, and this intellectual aristocracy was the source whence sprang the whole aristocratic structure of his Republic.

The theories of reformation are commonly aristocratic, but reform itself is always democratic, and the Republic is the head of a long line of imaginary remodelings of this world of ours which rest on the good that a few choice spirits are to communicate to their inferiors. According to Plato's scheme, there is to be strict subdivision of occupations among the citizens of the model state, and the load of government is to be borne by the oldest and wisest of these, called the Guardians. The training of these Guardians is described at considerable length; they are to be encouraged in bravery, and hear only stories that inculcate honor, courage; no Puritans were ever severer than Plato against the enervating lessons of the poets. He shares, too, their austerity in what he says about music; the only musical instruments to be allowed the Guardians being the lyre, the guitar, and the



pipe, and music must be simple and purifying. He lays much weight on their gymnastic training. These men will form the military class, and from their number the best are to be chosen, who are to rule according to the laws of strict conservatism: they are not to let the state grow too large; they must resist all modifications of the prescribed music and gymnastics, and they must prevent or remove excessive wealth or extreme poverty. With regard to the citizens, their occupations are rigidly subdivided. The whole plan, in a word, is one that is to be regulated by philosophers; it was not the lion, it will be remembered, who painted the picture. Curiously enough, there is a distinct resemblance, which writers have pointed out, between this ideal state and the construction of mediæval society. The strict subdivision of the men of the Republic into the wise rulers, the brave warriors, and the manual laborers or tradesmen, and the prominence given to the military class, which is sharply distinguished from the industrial, remind us of the Middle Ages; and the devotion to the study of the good which was enforced from philosophers is like the religious lives of the priests. Plato recommended the community of women and children: one of the main features of mediæval society was the partial abolition of marriage and property, and in both the ideal and real states women were admitted to the privilege of holding positions of responsibility. The similarity of the later facts to the earlier theories may be explained in part, perhaps, as an effort to carry into effect the Platonic thoughts which were of enormous weight in early Christianity; while other influences were those springing from the decay of society and barbarian conquest, which called forth the crudities which Plato secured by willfully abandoning the civilization of his time. The main resemblance lay in this, that both the Republic and the mediæval society did not build up a social unit, every part of which should be animated by a single feeling, but rather chose a favorite class, of philosophers by Plato, of priests in the Middle Ages, who should carry on the good work and be revered by the rest. Possibly this is a sufficient explanation of the many curious resemblances: like effects followed like causes.

Yet apart from the practicability of Plato's scheme is the spirit in which it is devised, and while setting the world right is a task beyond any one man's power, this attempt is the means of uttering much valuable criticism and comment concerning social and political affairs. It is easy to pick flaws in the plan, but it still remains a monument of honorable enthusiasm, not without the pathos that surrounds every failure of a generous spirit. What we notice in the Republic is its buoyancy, and especially when we contrast it with the Laws, which was written later, and again grapples with the problem of a perfect

state. As in some of his later dialogues, the accustomed grace and lightness of touch are gone; the machinery creaks, as it were, and instead of argument we have dogmatic assertion, and in place of discussion, formal assent. While the Republic is an ideal state, the Laws is an attempt to portray the best state possible for Greece under the existing conditions. Many of the principles are alike in the two schemes: the rules regarding education have many points of resemblance; there are to be strict regulations concerning music and songs; poets remain in disfavor, but in the Laws less prominence is given to the Philosophers. We see in the Republic how much the Spartan system had impressed Plato, in the Laws he adds some of the good points of Athenian life. Yet he is averse to a naval power, which was one of the strongest weapons of Athens. The community of wives and children is given up, as well as the overwhelming influence of philosophers. The question of the use of wine makes its appearance as a legislative problem. A strict conservatism controls the later state, and it is rigidly ruled by its council of government. After all, two attempted solutions of an impossible question are more than enough, and the world has taken its revenge by questioning the genuineness of the later scheme.

These two great dialogues, with the speculative *Philebus* and the *Critias*, with its account of the imaginary island of Atlantis, that has teased some readers into the belief that it refers to a legendary memory of America, complete the list of his accepted writings. How far-reaching these are, even this meager analysis may show, yet it is to be remembered that even from this abundance of material no separate system, which we can definitely call Platonism, is to be drawn. This fact the reader must bear in mind, as well as, to speak frankly, the repellant quality of much of Plato's work. This side of it is generally ignored by commentators, who are happiest when struggling with the inexplicable, and many a student, whose soul has been fired by the indiscriminate raptures that accompany every mention of Plato's name in cultivated society, has been left stranded on the barren quibbling and incomprehensible arguments of some of the interlocutors. It is true of Plato, as of every other writer, that he is at his best only occasionally, and it is truer of him than of most others, that when he is obscure, and that is not seldom, he defies comprehension more successfully than even most philosophers.

Yet apart from and above these difficulties there stands the image of the great man who tested and examined all the opinions of his time and left everywhere the touch of his inspiring enthusiasm. What he did was to give the world a sense of the infinite, and if he failed to define it clearly, the fault did not lie in him. As has been said before,



the core of Plato's philosophy is his theory of ideas, which assigned to them independent existence outside of the accidents to which the objects themselves were exposed. Thus the archetypal idea of a bed, of which real beds are but blundering copies, has existed from all time; and so with abstract ideas of justice, of the good, etc.; these are the truly existing things whereof life is an imperfect copy. The highest idea is that of the good, which seems to be identified with deity. Thus, it will be noticed, philosophy received from Plato a theological form, which was perhaps an inevitable result when speculation found its home in Athens. Yet the theology that he taught rose far above the ordinary Athenian superstitions; he set morality much higher than the conventionality of ritualism, and made religion consist in an intelligent imitation of God rather than in blind obedience. He taught the immortality of the soul and a pure monotheism, while the conduct of life was to be pure and virtue was to be desired, not because it ensured a pleasing reward, but because it was the sole health and well-being of the soul. Throughout, it was closely connected with knowledge, indeed inseparable from it, thus appealing to the two most elevating tendencies of human character. Is it wonderful that his immortal writings, masterpieces of mere literature as they are, should have formed a rich source of generous inspiration for countless ardent spirits?

It is to these fervent and elevating principles that Plato owes his vast influence upon subsequent ages rather than to any practicability in his plans for reforming society, and to take this last as the sole test, besides being simply impossible, would lead to the condemnation of nearly all the good that is advocated by priests and sages. Modern experience proves the narrowness of his carefully formed designs, but the world has not exhausted all the profit that is to be derived from his ardent love of justice and wisdom. What the world values is the height of aspiration; the statement of particulars can never be made precise without being faulty or defective; every law, no matter how carefully devised and guarded, is at some time or another the instrument of injustice; every rule that deals in the least with definitions is sooner or later found to be incompetent or wrong. The intricacy of the world defies definition and codification, exactly as the complications of human action present continual combinations unimagined by legislators. In other words, everything except such general statements as "Do right," "Love virtue," etc., lose their original clearness when one asks, what is right? what is virtue? and hears conflicting answers. But what prevails is the ardor with which these vague commands are uttered and the generosity with which their application is inculcated. Here Plato takes his place among the world's great mas-



ters by his ingenuity and eloquence, and the remote and divergent possibilities of the enthusiasm he has inspired and nourished attest the fruitfulness of his lessons. On the whole, different as have been the results of his teaching, they have been alike in one thing, in hopefulness and optimistic confidence. What all men aim at who strive to build up something better than the apparent possibilities of life, finds encouragement and support in his buoyant zeal; and just as evil is long-lived though cures abound, and, after martyrs have bled and died, the great world goes on blundering and sinning, yet the intense devotion of saints and sages, like all enthusiasms, counts as one of the forces forming the resultant that finds its expression in the thoughts and life of men.

Generally, the highest appeals have been of a religious sort, but in Plato we have the exceptional appearance of a man who speaks of all the higher duties from the point of view of, so to speak, a worldling. Whether this be an advantage or not will be temporarily determined some hundreds—or is it thousands?—of years hence, but now it may be acknowledged that the position which he has won for himself is at least interesting, because we see in him a man contending for what is the aim of saint and sage alike, for righteousness, with weapons of the intellect and not of the emotions. He applies to life what is, after all, the final test, that of the intelligence, and although he often does this unintelligently, in other words without the evidence that has since grown around a difficult subject, and doubtless without due comprehension of all the evidence before him,—for it must not be forgotten, notwithstanding all that is said about Plato, he was a human being,—yet, in spite of these objections, his aim was the noblest and his method the fullest that the world has known. The Socrates who is the mouth-piece for his instructions is, as it were, an unconsecrated religious teacher, who speaks not from a pulpit but in the market-place, and wholly without the remoteness from living interests which draws a bar between priests and laity in modern times. His authority is what he wrings in the shape of concessions from his most obstinate foes. Thus his magnificent declaration that it is better to suffer than to do wrong is proved by an irresistible line of argument that overcomes the most persistent opposition. His antagonists are not the customary men of straw whom we are accustomed to see falling at the first word of a philosopher's argument, but real incarnations of the world's opposition to new and improving truths. How thoroughly this view belonged to Plato we may infer from Xenophon's report of the statement of Socrates that true virtue consisted in kindness to one's friends and hostility to one's enemies, which was not a perversion of his own, but merely the expression of the current opinion; and in the story

that is reported of the rich Corinthian who was so moved by Plato's words that, like another unnamed enthusiast, he gave up all he possessed to devote himself to the new doctrine, we may see the inspiration that was drawn from his teaching.

It is this continual assertion of the superiority of the higher law that preserves Plato's importance, when his peculiarly metaphysical significance would interest only a small number, for all men are concerned with moral questions, and those who are interested in metaphysical questions are fewer. In him we find the culmination of all the gradual breaking up of the old religion, and of the enlargement of the ethical synthesis that had been going on in one way or another under the philosophers from the time that they began to question existing opinions. Of the influence of his words upon early Christianity this is not the place to speak. Evidence of its extent is easily found, and, like most evidence, it has been differently judged by men of opposing views. Some thought that Plato derived what he had to say from what were called the inspired books; others held that the early Christians drew inspiration from him. A curious similarity of statement between him and the Fathers is the least thing that these conflicting opinions prove, and in studying the history of thought it is impossible to overlook any testimony that shows its condition at any given time. It is at least undeniable that we find in his teachings the recommendation to philosophers, or lovers of wisdom, to hold themselves aloof from the things of this world; and in his praise of justice, which was the whole aim of his noble life, we may see what a spur was given to men's contemplation of a lofty ideal. His teaching of immortality again could not have been without result. For an example of what even the most reluctant to consider it must call a curious coincidence, we may take these words from the end of the *Republic*, where he describes the course of a soul after death:

"His story was, that when the soul had gone out of him, it travelled in company with many others, till they came to a mysterious place, in which were two gaps above in the heaven. Between these gaps sate judges, who, after passing sentence, commanded the just to take the road to the right upwards through the heaven, and fastened in front of them some symbol of the judgment that had been given; while the unjust had been ordered to take the road downwards to the left, and also carried behind them evidence of all their evil deeds."

## VII.

While Plato has held a lofty position for many centuries, his immediate followers inclined rather toward subdividing their master's teaching than toward handing it down as a whole. On his death,



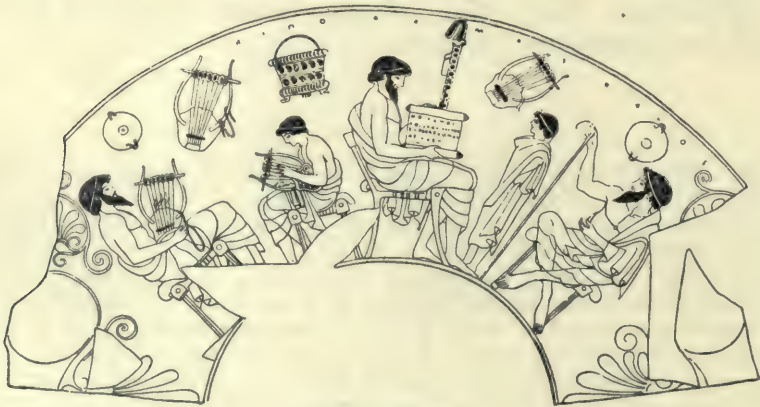
Plato was succeeded by his nephew Speusippus, born in Athens about 393 B.C., and living until 339 B.C. He carried on instruction in the Academy, according to his uncle's directions. He represented the Old Academy, as it was called; the divisions, which represented different philosophical tendencies, being known as the Middle and New Academy, respectively. Speusippus taught that there was an orderly series of existences, whereof the divine was the highest in rank and the latest in development. The mathematical principles which Plato had helped to make the basis of subsequent investigation were somewhat developed by him. Speusippus was succeeded by Xenocrates of Chalcedon (396-314 B.C.), who went further in the same direction and identified ideas with numbers. He discriminated between things sensible, intelligible, and intermediate things, which lay between the other two, and so were matters of opinion. The dwindling of the early inspiration seems to be the clearest result of this philosophizing. Polemo, who followed Xenocrates, turned his attention mainly to ethical teaching. Among others who held the position of pupils of Plato were Eudoxus of Cnidus, famous as a geometrician; Heraclides of Heraclea, who made interesting mathematical investigations that convinced him of the revolution of the earth upon its axis. Crantor, on the other hand, was interested in ethics. The mantle of Plato, it will be seen, was soon reduced to shreds. The Middle Academy was more sceptical; the most important names mentioned in connection with it are those of Arcesilas (315-241 B.C.), and Carneades (214-129 B.C.). Arcesilas was the successor of Crates, who was director of the school after Polemo. The New Academy began with Philo of Larissa, who lived at the time of the first Mithridatic War. He, and his disciple Antiochus, inclined toward the doctrines of the Stoics.

### VIII.

ATH.—When I see you thus earnest, I feel impelled to offer up a prayer, and can no longer refrain. Who can be calm when he is called upon to prove the existence of the Gods? Who can avoid hating and abhorring the men who are and have been the cause of this argument; I speak of those who will not believe the words which they have heard as babes and sucklings from their mothers and nurses, repeated by them both in jest and earnest, like charms, who have also heard and seen their parents offering up sacrifices and prayers — sights and sounds delightful to children — sacrificing, I say, in the most earnest manner on behalf of them and of themselves, and with eager interest talking to the Gods, and beseeching them, as though they were firmly convinced of their existence; who likewise see and hear the genuflexions and prostrations which are made by Hellenes and barbarians to the rising and setting sun and moon, in all the various turns of good and evil fortune,



not as if they thought that there were no Gods, but as if there could be no doubt of their existence, and no suspicion of their non-existence ; when men, knowing all these things, despise them on no real grounds, as would be admitted by all who have any particle of intelligence, and when they force us to say what we are now saying, how can any one in gentle terms remonstrate with the like of them, when he has to begin by proving to them the very existence of the Gods? Yet the attempt must be made; for it would be unseemly that one-half of mankind should go mad in their lust of pleasure, and the other half in righteous indignation at them. Our address to these lost and perverted natures should not be spoken in passion ; let us suppose ourselves to select some one of them, and gently reason with him, smothering our anger :—O my son, we say to him, you are young, and the advance of time will make you reverse many of the opinions which you now hold. Wait, therefore, until the time comes, and do not attempt to judge of high matters at present ; and that is the highest of which you think nothing—to know the Gods rightly and to live accordingly. And in the first place let me indicate to you one point which is of great importance, and of the truth of which I am quite certain :—You and your friends are not the first who have held this opinion about the Gods. There have always been persons more or less numerous who have had the same disorder. I have known many of them, and can tell you, that no one who had taken up in youth this opinion, that the Gods do not exist, ever continued in the same until he was old ; the two other notions certainly do continue in some cases, but not in many ; the notion, I mean, that the Gods exist, but take no heed of human things, and also the notion that they do not take heed of them, but are easily propitiated with sacrifices and prayers. What may be the true doctrine, if you are patient, and take my advice, you will hereafter discover, by the help of the legislator and others. In the mean time take heed lest you offend about the Gods. For the duty of the legislator is and always will be to teach you the truth of these matters.



SCHOOL ROOM.

### CHAPTER III.—ARISTOTLE.

I.—Aristotle's Unfortunate Rivalry with Plato. His Life. His Influence, Especially in the Middle Ages. The Consequences of Exaggerated Praise Not Unknown to Aristotle's Fame. II.—His Relations to his Predecessors. His Interest in Scientific Study. His Writings; their Lack of Literary Charm. The Manner of their Preservation. III.—His Conception of Philosophy, and his Division of its Functions. The Breadth of its Interests. The Politics, etc. His Repellent Style Compared with the Charm of Plato's. The Safe Middle Path which he Follows. His Cool Wisdom. IV.—The Poetics; its Importance to Modern Literature. V.—Extracts. VI.—The Peripatetics, and the Latest Course of Philosophy. Epicureans and Stoics.

#### I.

THE real successor of Plato was Aristotle, whose influence on the thought of the world has been second only to that of his illustrious master. Yet the lamentable partisanship of cultivated men, which leads them, when mention is made of prominent names in any department of thought, to praise their favorite by denouncing his rival, has found in Plato and Aristotle an admirable opportunity for exercise, so that defamation of one continually alternates with extravagant laudation of the other. The world is wide enough for both, however; sympathy with the intellectual and ethical enthusiasm of Plato need not render one insensible to the austerer merits of his rival. With regard to both it will be necessary to exercise the toleration due to men who lived when the subjects which they studied were yet comparatively in their infancy.

Aristotle was born 384 B.C.; that is, it will be noticed, exactly one century later than Herodotus, at Stagira, a town on the eastern coast of the Strymonic Gulf, whence the philosopher was given his familiar title, the Stagirite. His birthplace lay in a region that was at one time part of Thrace and at another that of Macedon, and was thus exposed to all the vicissitudes of war until between 350 and 347 B.C., Philip razed it among the thirty-two cities that he wiped out of existence for presuming to revolt against his power. His father was Nicomachus, an Asclepiad, or descendant of Æsculapius, according to the tradition which made that mythical founder of medical science the ancestor of those who practiced it. Of the early education of Aristotle we know but little; and the earliest authority from whom

our information is drawn lived six centuries later, a period during which it is impossible that legend should not have grown up about so remarkable a man. Yet accepting the familiar accounts in place of anything better, we learn that when Aristotle was about seventeen or eighteen years old he made his way to Athens, still the intellectual center of the world, and there he soon placed himself under Plato's instruction. Concerning his intercourse with Plato much gossip survives. We are told not only that Aristotle was extravagant and foppish, but that he also justly offended his teacher by acts of irreverence. On the other hand, we are told, what seems quite as likely, that the young



ARISTOTLE.

stranger won his elder's respect by his devotion to his studies, and Plato is said to have called him the mind of the school, as well as the reader. That in time there grew up in Aristotle's mind serious opposition to many of the Platonic theories is true, but the details handed down to us are of the nature of anecdotes, not facts. Aristotle remained twenty years in Athens, growing steadily in reputation as a student and as a teacher, giving instruction in rhetoric as well as in philosophy. On the death of Plato, he accepted the invitation of Hermias, ruler of Atarneus, to visit him, but this patron was soon after assassinated, and

Aristotle fled to Mytilene with the adopted daughter of Hermias, Pythias, whom he subsequently married. Soon after reaching Mytilene, he was invited by Philip to take charge of the education of Alexander, a proposition which he accepted. For four years he remained there, until at eighteen Alexander became Regent. How considerable was the influence of Aristotle and how important the reward of his pupil is a matter of uncertainty. It is said that the despot gave Aristotle vast sums to help him in his studies, but while this is likely enough, the facts are vague. In 355 B.C., Aristotle returned



to Athens, where he remained for thirteen years, teaching in the *peripatos*, or walking-place, of the Lyceum, whence, or from the word meaning to walk about, his disciples were called the Peripatetics. The death of Alexander gave new hopes to the party opposed to Macedon, and Aristotle was an object of attack, ostensibly on the ground of blasphemy, for he was accused of conferring divine honors upon mortals, that is, upon his wife and Hermias. Aristotle remembered the fate of Socrates, and discreetly withdrew, "in order not to give the Athenians a second opportunity to commit sacrilege against philosophy," as he is reported to have said. Shortly afterward he died, in 322 B.C., in the sixty-third year of his age.

The early Fathers of the Church were not displeased to gather and to retail anecdotes that set this formidable pagan in an unfavorable light, and doubtless their prejudices were protected by the Neo-platonists, whose influence on the beginnings of Christianity was considerable; they certainly had in their hearts no love for Aristotle. Yet we have received from other sources some of his sayings which confirm the report of his wit and generosity. On being told that some one had spoken ill of him in his absence, he said that his maligner was welcome to beat him—in his absence. When he was reproached with giving aid to an unworthy man, he made answer that he sympathized with him not on account of character, but because he was a man. Some one asked him why the society of handsome people was agreeable: "That is a blind man's question," he replied.

"The Athenians have discovered two things, wheat and laws," he said; "they know how to use the wheat, but not the laws."

"Hope is a waking dream."

Whatever may be the authenticity of these reported sayings, there is no doubt that what is left of Aristotle's writings confirms the impression of his intelligence and acuteness, yet it would be hard to name another eminent man whose fame has known such great vicissitudes. While in the Middle Ages he was the one infallible intellectual guide, and through the translation of Boethius established the lines on which the philosophy of that period was to move, for two hundred years his power has been broken and his name, after being treated with violent scorn, has been again the object of extravagant laudation as well as of virulent abuse. As we shall see later, his treatise on the art of writing poetry was the corner-stone of pseudo-classic literature; but he has paid for the reverence with which he was once treated, by enduring something not unlike religious persecution. When mediævalism revived early in this century, Aristotle's fame arose anew, and there was a brief recrudescence of his ancient glory along with the revival of Gothic architecture; and Hegel found undreamed-of merit in his

philosophy at the time when old armor came into use for household decoration, and glaziers began to receive orders for diamond-shaped window-panes. Where mediævalism still survives, as in the English universities, the name of Aristotle is still glorified. These statements are curious when we remember that Plato's ideal state bore a noticeable resemblance to the condition of society in the Middle Ages, and that Aristotle was the expression of an inevitable reaction; the irony of history could go no further. There is this to be said, however, that one important part of Plato's Republic is authority, the authority of the philosophers, and that he is far from being the only man who has thought that what he regarded as the truth had been found, and that although it had been discovered in freedom, it should be enforced by law rather than entrusted to the perils of discussion and prejudiced abuse. Indeed, the way in which the lofty ethical teachings of Christianity were petrified into a rigid code during the Middle Ages is another instance of the difference between hoping for and holding supreme command. Observers have already noticed how many liberal crown-princes there are and how few liberal kings—or, one might say, how many promising young men there are in this country, and how few wise Presidents—and Plato's Republic, with its full discussion of society, may serve to show how some liberal thinkers would like to establish free thought. There is no occasion for surprise; for persecution, if not a proof of wisdom, is certainly one of zeal.

That Aristotle should have become the instrument of authority is very natural, for at the very moment when intellectual liberty most languished, the chosen guide would not be the man whose words were animated by the utmost enthusiasm for freedom, even if he preached absolutism. The Platonic Socrates would have been a disturbing citizen in his own state, and the one of Plato's dialogues that had the most influence on mediæval thought was the *Timæus*, which was far from supplying either scientific or spiritual nutriment of a lasting kind. In Aristotle there was found a man who at least laid down the law, if not always perfectly intelligibly, yet with firmness and vigor, and he became an authority who was regarded as inspired.

While it is one advantage of the present time that the past is studied in a scientific spirit, Aristotle's reputation has still suffered from the exaggerations of those admirers who maintain that in his writings are to be found all the germs of modern science, clearly visible, if indeed not almost wholly developed. These statements are met by the counter-affirmation that nothing of the sort is to be seen there. In the examination of the works of a metaphysician and of a scientific man, obviously the first of these, who makes absolute statements about what transcends human experience, runs less risk of



refutation than does a man who speaks on subjects that can be tested by all his readers who have trained eyes. Hence, Plato may be ignored or not counted as a contributor to our knowledge of the unseen, but Aristotle is exposed to the disapprobation of those who care to make a comparison between his assertions and the facts that have been discovered by modern science. Examined in this way,—and the test is a severe one,—Aristotle can not fail to receive an unfavorable judgment; what he said he saw, has never been seen by mortal man; what he failed to see, is obvious to even superficial observers. His alleged anticipations of recent discoveries are few and unimportant, not so interesting as many of the happy conjectures of his predecessors, although many of those were the merest guesses, built upon no foundations, and as valueless scientifically as were the wishes of many people that they could talk together by means of an electric wire valueless as prior claims to the invention of the telephone. Many of these earlier hypotheses he treated with disdain for reasons which were inaccurate and misleading; and the explanations of his own which he offered in their place were frequently trivial and generally wrong. Yet, to judge Aristotle in this way, while it may serve to correct intemperate praise, is scarcely fairer than it would be to determine the value of Solon's legislation by comparing it with the common law of England. We can not estimate the value of his work by what we have learned to perceive by simple observation. It is easy to sneer at Aristotle for making statements of so-called facts which may be contradicted even by beginners in modern times, yet we should remember that intelligent observation is the difficult result of long training; that preconceived notions, the tendency to exaggerate, and overlook what may support or contradict an existing theory, are likely to mislead the student. The history of science, as of literature and of art, is a long record of the obstacles that thwart simplicity and directness.

## II.

A safer way of examining Aristotle's contributions to knowledge is by comparing it with what preceded it and what followed. To expect that by sheer effort of genius he should have solved questions that only reluctantly unfolded their secret to patient toil, made easier by instruments undreamt of in antiquity, merely shows how thin is the veneering of scientific training when men imagine that its results will be miraculously attained. Looked at in this way, that is to say, with regard to its position in the history of thought, Aristotle's performance deserves to be called the first real scientific work that the world had known. The earlier philosophers who had grappled with



the cosmos had devised theories of a poetical kind, each one fastening, as Grote has said, "upon some one grand and imposing generalization (set forth often in verse) which he stretched as far as it would go by various comparisons and illustrations, but without any attention to adverse facts or reasonings. Provided that his general point of view was impressive to the imagination, as the old religious scheme was to the vulgar, he did not concern himself about the conditions of proof or disproof." Zeno and Socrates began the dialectical discussion which showed how vague and unsatisfactory were such systems, Zeno by the baffling arguments that landed his opponents in absurdities, and Socrates by making ethics of more importance than the transcendental physics of his predecessors. And the method of Socrates was full of instruction for Aristotle, whose endeavor it was to give not merely to ethics, but to the whole subject of philosophy, a ground to stand on that did not depend on fancy or taste, but was fixed, absolute, and undeniable; in short, to give it a scientific basis. This step, which, it will be noticed, is anything but miraculous, follows closely on the work of his predecessors; without that, it could not have been taken, and its direction was in the line, though in advance, of the natural development of thought, only intensified and made more urgent by reaction from Plato. The brilliancy and eloquence of this famous idealist indubitably went for much in accenting Aristotle's distrust of intuitions as the ground of all real knowledge, and his confidence in sensuous perception. The method which he established, the principle of induction, is simply the method of our whole lives, so far as they are under the control of reason, and of the great wealth of modern science. Errors in his statement of this instrument of thought, as well as far more numerous and more curious errors in its application, have been often pointed out, but every beginner stumbles over obstacles that do not in the least trouble his followers. In spite of crudity and blundering, Aristotle saw, even if not with perfect clearness, what seemed to be the only profitable method for scientific work, and endeavored to apply it to the whole field of human knowledge. This is what gave him his enormous influence later, and wins for him the respect which is still his due. So much good work does not need to be exaggerated in order to be admired, or to be overpraised to prove interesting.

Aristotle's writings, which are fortunately many in number, demand careful, dispassionate criticism. His style is as unlike Plato's as possible. He is never eloquent, or pathetic, or brilliant; all the grace and charm of the earlier philosopher died with him; all the dramatic vividness is missing in the somewhat professorial utterance of the *Stagirite*, whose writings often read like the notes of a lecturer who is very indif-

ferent to literary form. It is easy to believe that his instruction in rhetoric was very unlike that of most of the Greek teachers of this art, and that he had but little in common with the flowery Isocrates, who was by far the most prominent of them all, and his most powerful rival. Certainly, the habit of the professional instructors, of compelling their pupils to learn approved speeches by heart, may well have dissatisfied others than Aristotle, who compared such counselors to a master who should teach his apprentices how to make shoes, by giving them a large number already made, to study. His own plan bears a likeness rather to instructing them in the anatomy of the foot, a method which is tardily producing good shoes, as a similar scientific method raises rhetoric from the state of mere imitation. In dialectics, too, the teachers made their pupils learn a certain number of dialogues by rote, and the same objection applied here. Aristotle's method, which he acknowledged might be defective, was one, however, in the right direction, toward a scientific study of logic.

A curious difficulty exists with regard to the writings of Aristotle. Not only have many been lost, and have unguine works found a place among those ascribed to him, while the authenticity of others is a matter of controversy, but there is also a curious lack of harmony between the list of his writings mentioned by the ancients and those that have come down to us. What seems probable is that most of his early writings, which possessed a literary charm wholly absent in what has reached us, have been lost, and that we possess his later and more serious work. The story of the preservation of his work is most romantic; whether it has other claims to attention may be doubted. The story hangs together with suspicious exactness. It seems, if the report is to be believed, that when Aristotle died his library and manuscripts came into the possession of Theophrastus, who was the head of the Peripatetic school until he died in 287 B.C. This collection Theophrastus left to Neleus, who carried it to his home at Shepsis, in Æolis, and there it remained in the hands of the descendants of Neleus for nearly two hundred years. Rather, not in the hands, but in their cellar, to preserve it from the kings of Pergamos, who, like modern borrowers, used to enlarge their libraries by helping themselves to the books of others. When this region came into the possession of the Romans, the ban was removed, and the cellar emptied. The manuscripts were purchased by Apellicon, a rich Athenian, who tried his hand, though unsuccessfully, at editing the treasures thus exhumed. When Sylla captured Athens, he found the fashion of annexing libraries supported by good authority, and he took the library of Apellicon to Rome, where the Aristotelian writings were classified and edited by the Rhodian Andronicus, and the popular works of Aristotle fell into



disrepute while these solidier ones began to be studied. What we have of the Stagirite is due to this lucky chance. Such, at least, is the story, which comes down to us full of detail; but, it may be worth our while to notice, we treat the ancients with a manifestation of gratitude that is the delight of cynics. That is to say, when they slur over the incidents, we abuse them for their reticence; and when they recount them at considerable length, we refuse to believe them.

### III.

Philosophy, according to Aristotle, is a science apart with a distinct aim, the knowledge of the absolute, and thus including all the separate sciences, each one of which is a distinct philosophy. Herein he affirmed what the Sophists and Skeptics denied, namely, the possibility of science as something attainable by the human intellect. Man alone possesses speech, whereby we can give utterance to our conceptions; and by means of our reason we conceive things as they are. The general methods of expression, or parts of speech, the categories, enumerated below, correspond to the different forms in which we conceive them or to the categories of our perception of them these categories again expressing the possible relation of objects to one another. Such, briefly stated, was the groundwork of Aristotle's notion of the possible ends to be accomplished by the human mind, and its universality marks a new period in thought, when a wide, general scheme could be conceived. Naturally, this is incomplete in view of the enormous enlargement of men's knowledge, but this objection, if it be an objection, is insignificant when we consider the conditions under which it was formed. Obviously, too, we shall find the method by which it was carried out depending on the contemporaneous condition of men's knowledge.

Logic, Physics, and Ethics were the main subjects of philosophy before the time of Aristotle, and they thus demanded and received his especial study. Yet while in Plato all these matters were blended together under the head of intellectual interests, in Aristotle we find them sharply discriminated and further divided into Logic, Rhetoric, Metaphysics, Physics, Psychology, Ethics, Politics, and *Æsthetics*. In what order these subjects are to be studied is a question with many diverse answers, for what Aristotle said and what he meant have been for many centuries never-ending topics of controversy for hosts of commentators. A useful and generally accepted division, however, is that into practical, constructive, and theoretical subjects. Practical science may be taken as treating of man and human action, and includes the Ethics and Politics. Constructive science deals with



art and its laws, as studied in his *Poetics*; and the theoretical science has to do with physics, mathematics, and theology, or metaphysics. It is to be remembered, however, that these divisions are more of the nature of a mnemonic device than a representation of any distinction which Aristotle anywhere sets down, but, accepting them with this understanding, we find the main boundary-lines are those between theoretical and practical science.

Underlying the whole course of studies which he pursued and in great measure established on a solid footing, was the dialectic method, by which alone any results could be obtained. All of this subject we include under the head of *Logic*, a name which it did not receive until after the time of Aristotle, but to his early editors it was known as the *Organon*, or instrument, a title that obviously suggested to Bacon his *Novum Organon*. To the *Organon* belong six separate treatises, the *Categories*, *On Interpretation*, *The First Series of Analytics*, *The Second Series of Analytics*, *Topics*, and *Fallacies*. The genuineness of the first two of these is doubted by some, although, even if these skeptics are right, it is yet true that the doctrines which they teach are distinctly Aristotelian, and during the Middle Ages they were studied more busily than any of his works. These categories were a test of the various predicaments possible in any imaginable proposition; they were: First, *Essence*, or substance,—as, man, horse. Second, *How much*, or quantity,—as, two or three cubits long. Third, *What manner of*, or quality,—as, white, black, learned. Fourth, *To something*, or relation,—as, double, half, greater, or smaller. Fifth, *Where*,—as, in Athens. Sixth, *When*,—as, last week, to-morrow. Seventh, *In what position*,—as, standing, or sitting. Eighth, *Having*,—as, to be shod or armed. Ninth, *Activity*,—as, burning or cutting. Tenth, *Passivity*,—as, being cut or being burned. As an ingenious writer has pointed out, this curious catalogue of the possibilities of human thought are but general expressions of all the simple forms of interrogation existing in the Greek language; but, great as was the attention paid to the *Categories* in the Middle Ages, Aristotle appears not to have set any great store by them. The essay *On Interpretation* is far more important; and although now much it says is become familiar and trite, at the time, the student of Plato may be sure, it must have prepared the way for clearness of thought and statement. The subject that he treats here is the proposition, regarded as to its truth or falsity, and the early attempt to state what a proposition is has great importance in the history of thought. In *Rhetoric*, as Aristotle said, he had been preceded by many, but *Logic* he practically worked out for himself. In the *Topics* he treated the science of disputation, or *Dialectics*, so well known to the Athenians, wherein he

endeavored to establish such general principles as would enable a pupil to discover and to judge reasons for and against any subject of discussion. Naturally the consideration of this matter brought him to the examination of the theory of the syllogism, which he expressly states that he was the first to formulate. To this work his *Analytics* was devoted, the first dealing with demonstration, the second with dialectic and sophistic. The work on *Fallacies*, or *Sophistic Refutation*, took up a subject that distinctly called for the attention of a logical thinker. The indulgence which Aristotle asked for the inevitable crudity of his work is not always granted him by those who forget how very hard are just those first steps in the foundation of a science.

In his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle in the first place gave a historical sketch of the work of his predecessors, to which we are indebted for almost all that we know of their efforts in this direction, and what he mentioned of their theories he criticised freely, in order to build up on the ruins of their work the theory which he had formed for himself. He has been accused of harshness and misrepresentation in this part of his metaphysical writings; if the accusation is accurate, it shows, for one thing, that he regarded the old systems as dangerous foes, for one is impartial only when all peril has disappeared. Against Plato's notion of ideas Aristotle spoke with considerable warmth, maintaining against it his own theory that the idea is nothing but the form in which the phenomenon or the material comes into existence, and that it does this through a third principle, namely, movement. In his view, the form is the actual thing, and matter more the potential thing, that may become this or that, but not necessarily any single object. Thus a piece of wood is only potentially, say, the leg of a table, only when it has assumed that form does it become a sensible, concrete object. Matter has a natural disposition for acquiring form, and form is the actual condition as distinguished from the potential condition of matter. Only through movement can these concrete objects attain existence. This movement is an eternal, unbroken process, which is inconceivable without a beginning, and without an unmoved thing which is the source of all movement. There are then three divisions, that which is only moved and does not move—matter; that which moves and is moved—nature; and that which moves and is not moved—God. This God, the cause of all movement, must be material, indivisible, and unbounded by space, without motion, change, or passion; it must be actual reality, pure energy. This pure activity can be found only in pure thought; God is then absolute thought, and, so far as he is this, is the real and living source of all life. But this thought can be directed only upon what is highest and



best, that is, upon himself ; hence, God is both thinking and the thing thought.

In Physics Aristotle worked hard and long ; what he did has been absurdly praised and violently ridiculed, two wrongs that counter-balance each other. Many—indeed, most—of his explanations of facts that have since been set in a proper light by science may not bear serious consideration, but what is more important is his attitude before questions then insoluble. All the forces of nature, he maintained, were forms of movement, which caused all changes and all development and decay. The differences between the elementary bodies were original, their number was four, and they were thus composed : warmth and dryness produced fire ; warmth and moisture, air ; cold and moisture, water ; cold and dryness, earth. These elementary substances are found united in all compound bodies, and the changes among them produce all development and decay. Outside of these things lies the ether with a circular movement ; this ether is an eternal, unchangeable substance, far above all the conflict of material objects. Its relation to the elements, and of the elements to one another, constitutes the nature of the universe. The earth appeared to him to be a globe-shaped body, about which other globe-shaped bodies moved in concentric circles, arranged in layers, one beyond the other. The limit of this universe was heaven, the region of divine things, where is neither space nor time. In the better known universe everything was arranged by divine foresight, for specific benefit to men ; outside of this is the heaven of the gods, unaffected by our laws as by our misdeeds. Let us leave these fantastic guesses to consider Aristotle's statements about the earth. He wrote on natural history, meteorology, mechanics, on the soul, carrying his encyclopædic studies far and into many regions. What is worthy of attention is not his power of observation, but rather his accumulation of facts. In this respect he showed that he was at least moving toward, if not in, the right path. Some of his remarks are full of wisdom ; thus he says, speaking of the parthogenesis of bees : " There are not facts enough to warrant a conclusion, and more dependence must be placed on facts than on reasonings, which must agree with facts," but these golden words, which are the very core of science, were not always the inspiration of his thought. Aristotle was after all a human being, and habit, authority, and prejudice combined to lead him astray. Often he saw the truth, but more often he wandered away from it ; like others, he failed to practice what he was competent to preach.

The list of his errors that the most indifferent observation might have corrected is very long, and doubtless came from a hasty accumu-



lation of alleged facts from various sources rather than from direct study. Apparently he regarded the work of science as already completed, and consequently all the work of the ancients that has formed the basis of modern science was the work of later men who had learned to doubt the principles on which he rested with such complacency. The coherence and the absoluteness of his theories gave them force in the Middle Ages, but a real advance has been made only when his system has fallen into neglect. No part of it, however, was longer-lived than his teleological notions, which permeated modern thought with their apparent proof that everything in the universe was created for the ends of practical utility. This notion of a cause still lies deep in men's minds, dimming and modifying direct study by imposing a theory with which their investigations must comply. A great deal of thinking has been saved for men by falling back on Plato's ideals and Aristotle's arguments from design.

The practical philosophy, as it is called, of Aristotle, consists of his treatises on Ethics and on Politics; and that on Rhetoric may also be included in this list, for in his discussion of this subject he treats many questions of ethics that one is not accustomed to find in such books. They were not common in Aristotle's time; the ordinary book of rhetoric of his day was a practical manual of directions, like its modern representative, while Aristotle's is a serious discussion of the principles of human nature as they are affected by oratory. The sources of persuasion he stated to be, first, the personal character which the speaker is able to exhibit or assume; second, the condition of mind into which he can bring his audience; and, third, the arguments, real or apparent, which he can bring forward. He distinguishes, too, the different kinds of oratory, and discusses the various passions to which the speaker may appeal. These divisions of his work are followed by sundry technical rules concerning the art of the rhetorician. These are curious and interesting enough, but obviously the most important part of the book is that in which the more general part of the subject comes under discussion. A similar discussion occupies the greater part of the treatise on Ethics, the *Nichomachæan Ethics*, as it is called, after Nichomachus, the son of Aristotle, who may have edited it and so have connected his name with the work. In this book Aristotle, who defines happiness as the ultimate and highest purpose of all action, tries to ascertain by what means it may be attained. It is, he says, the energy of life existing for its own sake, according to virtue which exists by and for itself. Virtue again is of two sorts, intellectual and moral; the moral virtues being capable of being acquired by practice. Training in right-doing will help to form habits of right-doing. The man who practises abstinence will

help to form the habit of abstinence, a statement that is full of physiological as well as moral truth. Furthermore, virtue is a matter that can not be defined with a fullness that shall cover all cases; it is a course that lies between two extremes, as prudent economy, for example, has to steer its way between extravagance and niggardliness, and to detect the golden mean requires extreme tact and care. Aristotle draws many vivid pictures of the wise application of the virtues, in which he shows his own full comprehension of the honorable characteristics of a worthy man, especially in what he says about friendship. Closely connected with the *Ethics* is his *Politics*, in which he discusses the happiness of whole peoples and not of individuals. He discusses the various civic relations of people and the different forms of government, and then takes up the consideration of what state would be the one best suited for human beings, or, in other words, what mode of life is the most desirable? Among the conditions he gives prominence to the education of the young in such a way that the harmonious cultivation of all physical and mental powers shall establish the virtue which was inculcated in his *Ethics*.

The two books are full of the shrewdest judgments of human nature, and acute criticisms,—the *Politics* especially,—of Greek civic life. At times he speaks like a modern man, that is to say, with scientific insight, although his range of vision is limited to a narrow field by the fact that the Greeks had not attained a conception of the greatness of a nation as compared with the more limited importance of a single city. Even Plato started from the conditions of Hellenic civilization when he constructed his theoretic state, and we may be prepared to find in Aristotle acceptance of facts as they were. A few lines from the eighth chapter of the eighth book of the *Politics* will illustrate his clearness and wisdom :

“In any polity in which a successful fusion of various elements has been achieved, we ought above everything to be on our guard against illegality, and especially to take precautions against insignificant steps in this direction. For illegality is imperceptibly admitted into States and brings them to ruin, as small expenses frequently incurred are the ruin of properties. The reason why the delusive process is not observed is that it does not take place all at once; for the judgment is deluded by petty acts of illegality, according to the sophistical argument that if every part is small, so is the whole. But although there is one sense in which this is true, there is another in which it is false. The truth is that the whole or the sum total is not small, but is only composed of small parts.

We must be on our guard then in the first place against this beginning of revolution, and secondly we must put no trust in the measures concocted as artifices to impose upon the masses, as they are proved by experience to be failures.”

But brief extracts can not do justice to a treatise that depends for



its value on a large number of closely connected links. It is not in single sentences that Aristotle's merit is most conspicuous, but rather the grasp that he gets of his subject, and the coherence of this treatment, that are admirable.

The examination of these two treatises is not a simple matter. Aristotle's style is without the grace and poetic fancy to be found in Plato, who continually delights us so that in yielding to his charm we forget the obstacles about which he leads us. To be sure, Aristotle often attracts us by a shrewd and homely wit, but the value of this is far less than that of Plato's impassioned eloquence; it is indeed the customary quality of those safer guides who, if it may be said without opprobrium, creep rather than fly. Then, too, it presents other difficulties. He moves backwards and forwards in confusing uncertainty; at times he knots the thread of his argument so that we can not readily make out in which direction he is tending; his digressions are many and vexatious; he repeats himself unnecessarily when his point is already clear, and again omits needed explanation—like a bad annotator—when his meaning is obscure. And when these difficulties are taken into account, there remains to be considered the quality of his work, his continual effort to maintain an equable position between extravagance and a sordid precision. He refuses to abandon the solid ground of facts; he shuns an appeal to the ideal; he seeks the safe and sure middle-ground; he dreads illusions. Thus, while he winds up one great era by the accumulation of its vast experience, he opens another in which the force of law is felt as something universal. The boundless ardor of the Greeks is transmuted into a quality that can flourish outside of Greece; his strong monotheism, his monarchical tastes, his cold morality, his inclination towards a distinct materialism, all mark a great change. It may well have seemed that inspiration had expired, and that all that was left for men was the capacity for taking pains.

This statement makes clear the distinction, that is continually forced upon the reader, between Plato and Aristotle, and in the work of the later writer we find frequent criticism of his master. This is especially true of the *Politics*, when his aim is not, like that of Plato, the formation of an ideal state, but the definition of the best system that can be devised. The subject was a burning one, and they, although the greatest, were not the only men who were discussing it. We know Xenophon's contributions to the question, and history tells us what solution was given to the need that the narrow boundaries of Hellas should be broken and that the civilized world should receive its teachings, and in Aristotle we may read a most important document regarding the theory. In his *Politics* he sets down the natural



rights of the state, resting on the double basis of the family and the slave. He sharply criticises Plato's communism in wives and property, and proceeds to discuss the various forms of government. These he enumerates in the following order of merit: 1, monarchy, 2, aristocracy, 3, constitutional republic, 4, democracy, 5, oligarchy, 6, tyranny; deciding, however, that, human nature being what it is, a constitutional republic is the form to be preferred. The best state is that which grants the best lives to its inhabitants, and what this is, and how it is to be attained, he defines by a most practical exposition of his notions concerning the aims and methods of education; here as everywhere we see him legislating, not for a Utopia, but for the world that he saw about him, and we observe his continual tendency to keep near the earth, to examine things as they are and not as they might be. The peril of this habit of mind we may detect in his contempt for the happier guesses of the Ionic philosophers; its value, in his continual shrewd wisdom. After all, jesting Pilate's question, "What is Truth?" is not yet answered.

In the *Ethics* we may see more vivid instances of his safe mediocrity, if this word may be accepted without any evil flavor, or, if the phrase is preferred, of his hard-headedness. The first part of the discussion is not devoid of a certain obscurity, but the upshot of his argumentation is that the happiness which is the chief end of life must rest on human nature, or the facts of life, and not be a remote ideal.

It is not the lofty preaching of a seer or an enthusiastic instructor that we find in his cooler pages, but a philosopher's exposition of the virtues that reminds us of the legislator's discussion of right and wrong. Happiness, according to him, is not an exalted state, but the result of the equilibrium between the intellect and the animal elements of human nature. It is like Aristotle himself in its avoidance of extremes; it is this harmonious wisdom, the mean, at which he ever aims, that he sets before the world. The extracts given below will make clear what in comparison with Plato's fervent appeals sounds like a tepid inculcation of discreet conduct. Yet there is room for both; the world has never been overcrowded by discretion. His way of commending it by continual examination of possible conditions is full of the seeds of future casuistry, and the nature of his answers corresponds closely with the common sense of his *Politics* and with the general yearning of his fellow-countrymen for a precise statement of formal law. Just as he recommended a state that admitted to citizenship only men who enjoyed an honorable leisure, so here he presupposed a cool wisdom, guiding and controlling every action; he thus contributed to the establishment of an aristocracy of the intelligent,

and made himself a safe master for men who accepted authority and discipline. A Platonist would make a bad slave,—at any moment he might perceive the divine vision, and then obedience would fall from him; but an Aristotelian would never know such mutiny; active enthusiasm would be, to his mind, a mere outbreak of ignorance, leading only to confusion. And between these two tendencies the world is ever moving; to condemn either is as unwise as it is ineffectual, and has for its main result only information about the man who sees fit to blame or praise.

Every fault has been found in Aristotle as well as every virtue, but his historical importance has never been diminished; this was due, in some measure, to his packing up the results of Greek thought into portable manuals for other people. He prepared condensed intellectual nutriment for foreign races; and when Greece was almost as wholly forgotten as Carthage or the Etruscan civilization, Aristotle kept the sacred fire burning, even if dimly, against its more brilliant rekindling in the Renaissance.

There remains to be considered his treatise on Poetics, a book which, as has been said, has exercised a long-lived and important influence on later literature. That it has had this influence is natural enough. Men prefer to learn their ethics and politics in the costly school of experience. Theories on these subjects have as little seeming practical importance for most of us as do investigations in the higher mathematics, but instruction in literature is always welcome, and the more authoritatively it is uttered, the more willingly is it obeyed. Certainly Aristotle's Poetics has never lacked admirers and disciples; until very recently it was the corner-stone on which, one might say, a good part of modern literature was built. So long as literature grew up under fear of what had been done by Greece and Rome, and it was thought that the only way of writing an epic poem was by imitating the epics of the ancients, and that no other tragedies than theirs were at all worthy of consideration, critics and writers combined in enforcing the rules of Aristotle, whose authority in literature naturally grew greater from the reverence his name still inspired. Naturally enough, they regarded Romans and Greeks as together composing the ancients, and remained contented with reading Seneca's plays and Aristotle's Poetics, which last formed the basis of Horace's rules, without troubling themselves to examine the great Greek tragedies. The famous three unities which so long held control over the classic tragedies of Europe rested on the words of Aristotle, and on what it was supposed he would have said if he had not deemed the statement superfluous. The unity of time seemed secure in obedience to his assertion that tragedy is limited by one period of the sun, with



but little variation permissible. The question, to be sure, arose whether this meant twelve or twenty-four hours, but the inconvenience of either limit was accepted when authority was triumphant. The unity of action none questioned; that of place was the one that rested on what Aristotle would have said if he had thought it worth while. Of the four divisions of poetry mentioned by him, the epic, tragic, comic, and dithyrambic, it is only the second that is spoken of at any considerable length. And while it is not wise to spend time in discussing what might have happened, we may yet find some consolation for our loss in the thought of how much heavier would have been the load under which pseudo-classical literature staggered, if more direct precepts of Aristotle had come down to us. A fuller collection of rules would have meant a longer pupilage and a harder struggle before men dared to write without an eye on their Greek or Roman masters. As it was, this fragmentary treatise, which after all may not have been written by Aristotle, has been the subject of never-ending controversy. One phrase that it contains—a definition of the function of tragedy—has received from commentators as much attention as if it dealt with an uncertain point in theology.

“Tragedy,” Aristotle says, “is an imitation of a worthy or illustrious and perfect action, possessing magnitude, in pleasing language, using separately the several species of imitation in its parts, by men acting, and not through narration, through pity and fear effecting a purification from such like passions.”

It is the last words that have proved a stumbling-block that has called for nearly a hundred explanations. Possibly, as some have suggested, the real meaning is not so remote as others have thought, and Aristotle merely referred to the relief from the weight of one's own cares that one feels after seeing some intense tragedy represented on the stage.

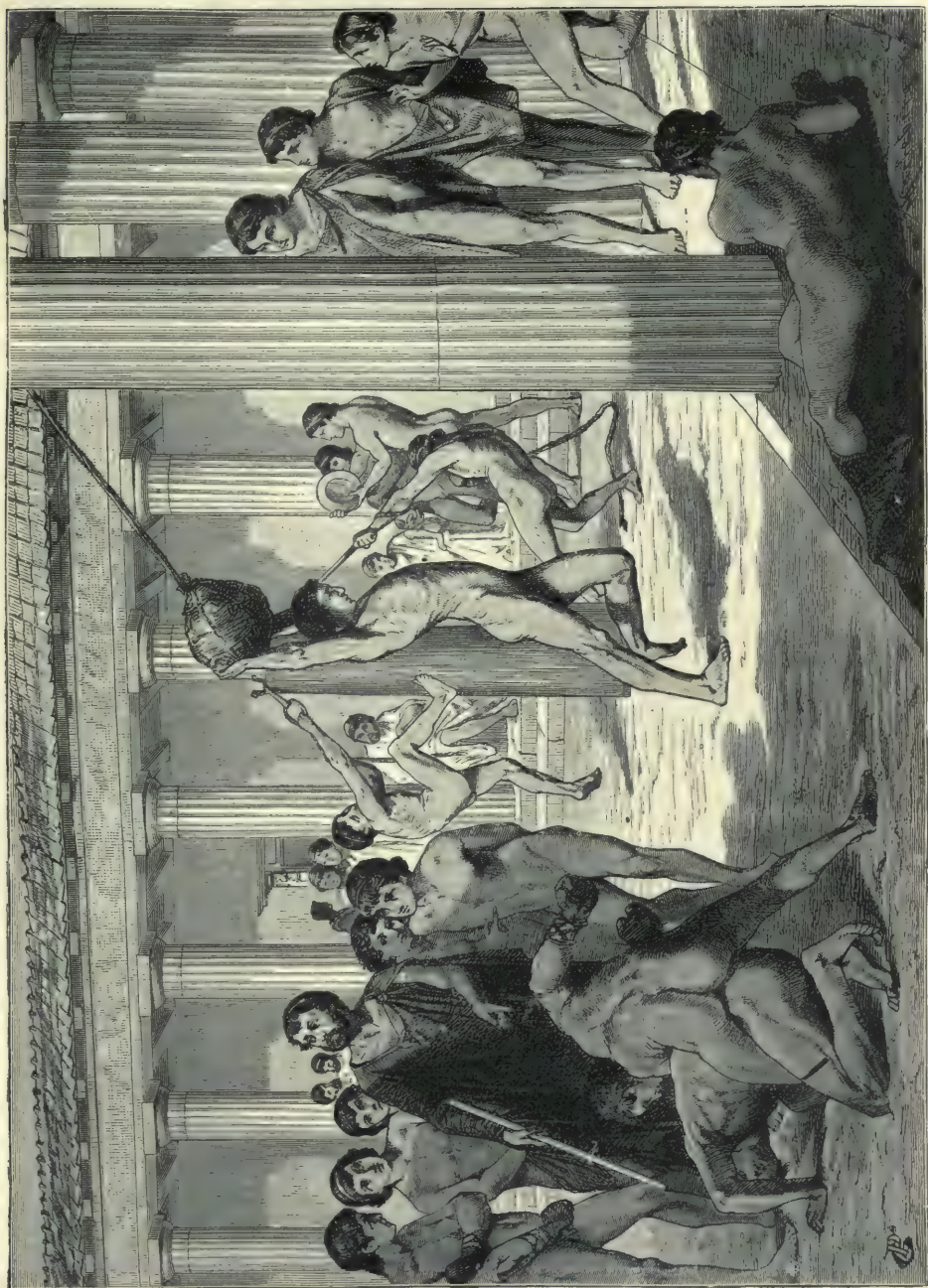
In general, however, his remarks are simpler, and they are for the most part of a sort that commend themselves to the reader. The aim of tragedy he takes to be the moral instruction or elevation of the spectator, thus differing from those who maintain that artistic excellence should be the poet's sole aim, but also differing from those who maintain that literature should be only didactic. Perhaps, as we have said before, the truth lies between the exaggeration of the two extremes, and every picture of life, like all experience, has unavoidably an instructive quality.



## V.

No one will doubt that the legislator should direct his attention above all to the education of youth, or that the neglect of education does harm to states. The citizen should be moulded to suit the form of government under which he lives. For each government has a peculiar character which originally formed and which continues to preserve it. The character of democracy creates democracy, and the character of oligarchy creates oligarchy; and always the better the character, the better the government. Now for the exercise of any faculty or art a previous training and habituation are required; clearly, therefore, for the practice of virtue. And since the whole city has one end it is manifest that education should be one and the same for all, and that it should be public, and not private,—not as at present, when every one looks after his own children separately, and gives them separate instruction of the sort which he thinks best; the training in things which are of common interest should be the same for all. Neither must we suppose that any one of the citizens belongs to himself, for they all belong to the state, and are each of them a part of the state, and the care of each part is inseparable from the care of the whole. In this particular the Lacedæmonians are to be praised, for they take the greatest pains about their children, and make education the business of the state.

That education should be regulated by law and should be an affair of state is not to be denied; but what should be the character of this public education, and how young persons should be educated, are questions which remain to be considered. For mankind are by no means agreed about the things to be taught, whether we look to virtue or the best life. Neither is it clear whether education is more concerned with intellectual or with moral virtue. The existing practice is perplexing; no one knows on what principle we should proceed—should the useful in life, or should virtue, or should the higher knowledge, be the aim of our training; all three opinions have been entertained. Again, about the means there is no agreement; for different persons, starting with different ideas about the nature of virtue, naturally disagree about the practice of it. There can be no doubt that children should be taught those useful things which are really necessary, but not all things; for occupations are divided into liberal and illiberal; and to young children should be imparted only such kinds of knowledge as will be useful to them without vulgarizing them. And any occupation, art, or science, which makes the body or soul or mind of the freeman less fit for the practice or exercise of virtue, is vulgar; wherefore we call those arts vulgar which tend to deform the body, and likewise all paid employments, for they absorb and degrade the mind. There are also some liberal arts quite proper for a freeman to acquire, but only in a certain degree, and if he attend to them too closely, in order to attain perfection in them, the same evil effects will follow. The object also which a man sets before him makes a great difference; if he does or learns anything for his own sake or for the sake of his friends, or with a view to excellence, the action will not appear illiberal; but if done for the sake of others, the very same action will be thought menial and servile. The received subjects of instruction, as I have already remarked, are partly of a liberal and partly of an illiberal character. The customary branches of education are in number four; they are—(1) reading and writing, (2) gymnastic exercises, (3) music, to which is



YOUTH IN GYMNASIUM.



sometimes added (4) drawing. Of these reading and writing and drawing are regarded as useful for the purpose's of life in a variety of ways, and gymnastic exercises are thought to infuse courage. Concerning music a doubt may be raised; in our own day most men cultivate it for the sake of pleasure, but originally it was included in education because nature herself, as has often been said, requires that we should be able, not only to work well, but to use leisure well; for, as I must repeat once and again, the first principle of all action is leisure. Both are required, but leisure is better than occupation; and therefore the question must be asked in good earnest, what ought we to do when at leisure? Clearly we ought not to be amusing ourselves, for then amusement would be the end of life. But if this is inconceivable, and yet amid serious occupations amusement is needed more than at other times (for he who is hard at work has need of relaxation, and amusement gives relaxation, whereas occupation is always accompanied with exertion and effort), at suitable times we should introduce amusements, and they should be our medicines; for the emotion which they create in the soul is a relaxation, and from the pleasure we obtain rest. Leisure of itself gives pleasure and happiness and enjoyment of life, which are experienced, not by the busy man, but by those who have leisure. For he who is occupied has in view some end which he has not attained; but happiness is an end which all men deem to be accompanied with pleasure and not with pain. This pleasure, however, is regarded differently by different persons, and varies according to the habit of individuals; the pleasure of the best man is the best, and springs from the noblest sources. It is clear then that there are branches of learning and education which we must study with a view to enjoyment of leisure, and these are to be valued for their own sake; whereas those kinds of knowledge which are useful in business are to be deemed necessary and exist for the sake of other things. And therefore our fathers admitted music into education, not on the ground either of its necessity or utility, for it is not necessary, nor indeed useful in the same manner as reading and writing, which are useful in money-making, in the management of a household, in the acquisition of knowledge and in political life, nor like drawing, useful for a more correct judgment of the works of artists, nor again like gymnastic, which gives health and strength; for neither of these is to be gained from music. There remains, then, the use of music for intellectual enjoyment in leisure; which appears to have been the reason of its introduction; this being one of the ways in which it is thought that a freeman should pass his leisure; as Homer says—

‘How good it is to invite men to the pleasant feast’;

and afterwards he speaks of others whom he describes as inviting

‘The bard who would delight them all.’

And in another place Odysseus says there is no better way of passing life than when ‘men’s hearts are merry, and the banqueters in the hall, sitting in order, hear the voice of the minstrel.’

It is evident, then, that there is a sort of education in which parents should train their sons, not as being useful or necessary, but because it is liberal or noble. Whether this is of one kind only, or of more than one, and if so, what they are, and how they are to be imparted, must hereafter be determined. Thus much we are now in a position to say that the ancients witness to us; for their opinion may be gathered from the fact that music is one of the received and traditional branches of education. Further, it is clear that



children should be instructed in some useful things,—for example, in reading and writing,—not only for their usefulness, but also because many other sorts of knowledge are acquired through them. With a like view they may be taught drawing, not to prevent their making mistakes in their own purchases, or in order that they may not be imposed upon in the buying or selling of articles, but rather because it makes them judges of the beauty of the human form. To be always seeking after the useful does not become free and exalted souls. Now it is clear that in education habit must go before reason, and the body before the mind ; and therefore boys should be handed over to the trainer, who creates in them the proper habit of body, and to the wrestling-master, who teaches them their exercises.

#### EXTRACT FROM THE NICHOMACHÆAN ETHICS.

We have next to speak of equity and of that which is equitable, and to inquire how equity is related to justice, and that which is equitable to that which is just. For, on consideration, they do not seem to be absolutely identical, nor yet generically different.

At one time we praise that which is equitable and the equitable man, and even use the word metaphorically as a term of praise synonymous with good, showing that we consider that the more equitable a thing is the better it is. At another time we reflect and find it strange that what is equitable should be praiseworthy, if it be different from what is just ; for, we argue, if it be something else, either what is just is not good, or what is equitable is not good ; if both be good, they are the same.

These are the reflections which give rise to the difficulty about what is equitable. Now, in a way, they are all correct and not incompatible with one another ; for that which is equitable, though it is better than that which is just (in one sense of the word), is itself just (in another sense), and is not better than what is just in the sense of being something generically distinct from it. What is just, then, and what is equitable are generically the same, and both are good, though what is equitable is better.

But what obscures the matter is that though what is equitable is just, it is not identical with, but is a correction of, that which is just according to law.

The reason of this is that every law is laid down in general terms, while there are matters about which it is impossible to speak correctly in general terms. Where, then, it is necessary to speak in general terms, but impossible to do so correctly, the legislator lays down that which holds good for the majority of cases, being quite aware that it does not hold good for all.

The law, indeed, is none the less correctly laid down because of this defect ; for the defect lies not in the law, nor in the lawgiver, but in the nature of the subject-matter, being necessarily involved in the very conditions of human action. When, therefore, the law lays down a general rule, but a particular case occurs which is an exception to this rule, it is right, where the legislator fails and is in error through speaking without qualification, to make good this deficiency, just as the lawgiver himself would do if he were present, and as he would have provided in the law itself if the case had occurred to him. What is equitable, then, is just, and better than what is just in one sense of the word—not better than what is absolutely just, but better than that which fails through its lack of qualification. And the essence of what is equitable is that it is an amendment of the law in those points where it fails through the generality of its language.

The reason why the law does not cover all cases is that there are matters

about which it is impossible to lay down a law, so that they require a special decree. For that which is variable needs a variable rule, like the leaden rule employed in the Lesbian style of masonry ; as the leaden rule has no fixed shape, but adapts itself to the outline of each stone, so is the decree adapted to the occasion.

We have ascertained, then, what the equitable course is, and have found that it is just, and also better than what is just in a certain sense of the word. And after this it is easy to see what the equitable man is : he who is apt to choose such a course and to follow it, who does not insist on his rights to the damage of others, but is ready to take less than his due, even when he has the law to back him, is called an equitable man ; and this type of character is called equitableness, being a sort of justice, and not a different kind of character.

Is it in prosperity or adversity that we most need friends ? For under both circumstances we have recourse to them : in misfortune we need help, in prosperity we need people to live with and to do good to ; for we wish to do good. In adversity, it may be answered, the need is more pressing ; we then require useful friends ; but friendship is a nobler thing in prosperity ; we then seek out good men for friends ; for it is more desirable to do good to and live with such people. The mere presence of friends is sweet, even in misfortune ; for our grief is lightened when our friends share it. And so it might be asked whether they literally take a share of it as of a weight, or whether it is not so, but rather that their presence, which is sweet, and the consciousness of their sympathy, make our grief less. But whether this or something else be the cause of the relief, we need not further inquire ; the fact is evidently as we said. But their presence seems to be complex in its effects. On the one hand, the mere sight of friends is pleasant, especially when we are in adversity, and contributes something to assuage our grief ; for a friend can do much to comfort us both by sight and speech, if he has tact : he knows our character, and what pleases and what pains us. But, on the other hand, to see another grieving over our misfortunes is a painful thing ; for every one dislikes to be the cause of sorrow to his friends. For this reason, he who is of a manly nature takes care not to impart his grief to his friends, shrinking from the pain that it would give them, unless this is quite outweighed by the relief it would give him ; and generally he does not allow others to lament with him, as he is not given to lamentations himself ; but weak women and effeminate men delight in those who lament with them, and love them as friends and sympathizers. (But evidently we ought in all circumstances to take the better man for our model.)

In prosperity, again, the presence of friends not only makes the time pass pleasantly, but also brings the consciousness that our friends are pleased at our good fortune. And for this reason it would seem that we should be eager to invite our friends to share our prosperity, for it is noble to be ready to confer benefits,—but slow to summon them to us in adversity, for we ought to be loth to give others a share of our evil things : whence comes the saying, “That I am in sorrow is sorrow enough.” But we should be least unwilling to call them in when they will be likely to relieve us much without being greatly troubled themselves.

But, on the other hand, when our friends are in trouble, we should, I think, go to them unsummoned and readily (for it is a friend’s office to serve his friend, and especially when he is in need and does not claim assistance, for then it is nobler and pleasanter to both) : when they are in prosperity,



we should go readily to help them (for this is one of the uses of a friend), but not so readily to share their good things ; for it is not a noble thing to be very ready to receive a benefit. But we may add that we ought to be careful that our refusal shall not seem ungracious, as sometimes happens.

The presence of friends, then, in conclusion, is manifestly desirable on all occasions.

## VI.

After the death of its founder, the Peripatetic school continued its existence, first under the charge of Aristotle's favorite disciple, Theophrastus of Lesbos. This new leader was a busy student whose writings covered a long list of subjects, the most important being a continuation of Aristotle's work in natural history, especially in botany and geology. But we have little of what he wrote: his *Characters*, which, however, have survived, are amplifications of the ethical studies which are to be found in Aristotle, and throw considerable light on the thought of the time, with their delicate study of the dispositions of various sorts of men. This little book of *Characters*, though its genuineness has been doubted, and it bears no relation to formal philosophy, is of interest as showing how far the general attention of the public was turned to the minutiae of daily life, to the study of the individual—a movement that is very distinct in the more solemn works of literature, and naturally to be expected here. The acuteness that the book shows is exactly that of a time when observation is busy with apparent trifles, and the most interesting object of study is the minor qualities of human nature. And it is these little details—each one of which, taken by itself, is petty—that survive changes of religion, of politics, and of philosophy ; whatever else may alter, the flatterer never forgets his cunning, nor does his victim ever fail to know the smile of delight that his wiles infallibly produce. Stupidity, superstition, vainglory, have the same immortality ; the weaknesses of mankind belong to all times and all nations, like illness or old age, and their delineation records our wide relationship. He seems to have been the first to lead the philosophy of Aristotle in the sensualistic direction, which it soon followed. He was the head of the school until 286 B.C. Heracleides of Pontus and Aristoxenus of Tarentum were among his fellow-pupils. The latter was a famous musician, of whose philosophy we know only that he regarded the soul as the harmony of the body, therein differing from his master. Most of the other Peripatetics gave their main attention to physical science ; thus, Dicæarchus tried to prove that the soul was mortal, resting his belief on the theory that it was merely the harmony of corporeal elements and so ceasing with them. The loss of his other writings—especially one on the geography, history,



and the moral and religious state of Greece—is much to be lamented. Straton also pursued physical problems, abandoning the study of

ethics and avowing purely materialistic doctrines. The successors of these men occupied themselves with editing, repeating, and discussing the writings of Aristotle.

Along with the later followers of Plato and the Peripatetics there flourished the Epicureans, the Stoics, and the Skeptics. The influence of all of these, however, was more fully felt in Rome than in Greece, and their principles may be more justly discussed later. Now it will be sufficient to say that Zeno, the founder of the Stoics, was born on the island of Cyprus, though the date of his birth is unknown. He flourished about 300 B.C. Epicurus, the founder of the Epicurean school, was born in the island of Samos, 342 B.C., and was thus a contemporary of Zeno. He taught in Athens, and the gardens where he gave his lessons became the rival of the porch where Zeno taught his philosophy. While the Stoics derived a good part of their theories from the Cynics, the Epicureans were also a later outgrowth of the Cyrenaic school. The name of Epicurus acquired an evil fame as a teacher of rank



EPICURUS.

luxury, but only by misrepresentation, for his philosophy was a serious pursuit of truth. The main difference between the two sects was between two different ways of regarding the universe—

the difference between spiritualism and materialism. Pyrrho, the founder of the Skeptics, also flourished about 300 B.C.; he appears to have carried on the line of thought which marked the Sophists, and to have maintained the impossibility of any real knowledge. In these five general paths philosophy moved until the extinction of the intellectual life of the Greeks.

The decay began with the death of Aristotle, and he and Plato still survive as the two greatest philosophers of Greece, as the men who drew the lines on which posterity was to move. All that emotion, eloquence, poetry can do for the thought of men is what Plato has represented as no other writer has ever done, while Aristotle stands for the cooler, unimpassioned work of science. Every one, said Friederich Schlegel, is either a Platonist or an Aristotelian, and although the accuracy of the statement is often denied, and great pains are taken to show that Aristotle's science is no science, it yet remains true that the two men mark the two attitudes in which the universe may be regarded. Here, as in almost every department of intellectual exercise, the Greeks left the rest of the world to follow them.

That after the work of these two illustrious leaders what may be called constructive philosophy should have languished in Greece, is not surprising when we consider the political history of that country. The hope of material power under the new conditions faded away, and the resignation to the change expressed itself by modifying the philosophic thought into something like religious enthusiasms, for such were the essential qualities of these new schools. In Stoicism, for instance, we find a very fervent feeling of devotion, and a most marked insistence upon the necessity of morality. The Epicureans, too, in spite of their bad name, and the convenience of an epithet often outweighs its justice, tempered the austerity of the Stoics by enlarging the field of morality, and by including cultivation within the desirable aims of men. With the suppression of an outlet in political life, men's energies were turned to the study of individuals, and thus the sage prepared himself to meet the troubles of life as best he could, and lost the civic sense of the old times to become a citizen of the whole world. Their full development will be seen, however, when we come to study the Romans. Yet here it is curious to notice how much the philosophy of the Epicureans resembled some of the most important modern theories, and while it thus held out one hand to the future, its connection with the early teachings of Democritus is equally close. The atomic theories of that wonderful man were brought forward again with new vigor,—to be sure, as a hypothesis incapable of verification, yet with a tendency towards probability that was of vast influence upon many leaders of thought. And in the ethi-

cal side of his lessons there was an equal force, not the force of fanaticism, but that of quiet conviction, as we see it in the statement that "it is impossible to live pleasantly without living wisely, and well, and justly; and it is impossible to live wisely, and well, and justly, without living pleasantly."

Curiously enough, the lessons of utilitarianism underlie the principles of Epicureanism, the bad name of which only shows that rival philosophers are as earnest as rival politicians. Instead of dividing the world into Platonists and Aristotelians, it may be fairer to class all thinking men as either materialists or spiritualists, and to this latter class would belong followers of both Plato and Aristotle.





## BOOK VII. HELLENISM.

### CHAPTER I. ALEXANDRIA, THEOCRITUS.

- I.—The Succession of Alexandria to Athens. The Intimate Relation of Alexandrinism to Modern Literature, through the Roman. The Survival of Greek Intellectual Influence after Political Decay. The Gradualness of the Change. II.—The Importance of Alexandria for the Cosmopolitan Sway of Greek Influence. Its Generous Equipment for its New Duties. The Beginnings of Scholarship. III.—The Learning Influences the Literature. Theocritus, and his Work. Its Relation to Contemporary Art. Bion and Moschus. IV.—Extracts.

#### I.

WHEN Greece succumbed to the Macedonian power, its art and literature underwent a modification that coincided with the political changes whereby that country was reduced to the condition of a dependent state. Demosthenes and Aristotle died within a year of each other, and they were followed by no great men; intelligence, wit, learning survived, and in new conditions helped to bridge the gulf between the wonderful past and the later civilizations, between

“the glory that was Greece  
And the grandeur that was Rome,”

but the original harmony of political enthusiasm and artistic production was broken, and Greece became a name. Yet the various qualities remained even when the controlling and guiding inspiration was lacking, and in studying the lines on which they moved we are actually much nearer the beginnings of modern literature than we have been hitherto in examining what may be called the national work of Greece. Until the beginning of the present century the classics were the sole approved model, but it was the Roman classics that served this useful purpose, and the Romans, like our ancestors, really preferred the Alexandrine copies to the severer originals. The change may be called a most important process of transformation from art to artifice, rather than mere decay, and it can be profitably studied only when we refuse to condemn the steps that slowly led to making our literature what it is. Hence, our study of the later developments is no less important and interesting than that of what preceded it.

As an incident in the history of Greece, the Macedonian supremacy was a fatal blow; that country was at once relegated to the condition

of a dependent province, and all the springs that had fed its literature were at once dried up. The drama lingered as a picture of social complications, but the early national spirit was broken, and the comedy only reflected the many-sided possibilities perhaps rather than the actual incidents of every-day life; and the philosophy became mainly an instrument of moral instruction. But while this condition of things is most lamentable for those who study history in sections, there is another side to the matter which is full of interest. As an event in the history of the world, the breaking of the old limits of



ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

national existence was something of incalculable importance, because thereby the Greek intelligence was set free to make its way throughout all contemporary civilization. It was readily understood that material power had slipped from the hands of the Greeks, but their intellectual authority remained without a rival, and towards asserting, defending, explaining, and promulgating this, every effort was bent. It was here that its power lay, and since the conquests of Alexander practically laid open the East, and the establishment of Alexandria created a new capital of the world where men of all races were welcomed, the Greek superiority had an opportunity to make new conquests.

It is, however, of the first importance to remember that the change was not a sudden one, which is only to be detected when a comparison is made between any book written in Athens and any book written in Alexandria. No such sudden alteration is possible; the process of transformation is always gradual; just as summer shades into winter by a series of differences each one of which contains qualities of both seasons, the belated warm day and the moderate frost, so here the development of literature took place with no violent cataclysm, but by comparatively distinct processes. Already in Menander we may detect the underlying basis of individualism which is discernible in Euripides; and in the graceless pose of Aristotle we may see the severance between science and literature that was, like individualism, so prominent in Alexandria, and the late separation between letters and life is clearly to be seen in the efforts of the last Athenian writers, more especially in the work of Menander. Isocrates, too, as we have seen, abounds with instances of the use of oratory as a thing of artifice.

The whole Alexandrine literature was but the legitimate development of Greek literature; what was implicit in the later writings of Athens found explicit utterance, furthered, to be sure, by the conditions of the new civilization, but not created by them alone. The political change was itself the natural outcome of the disorganization of Greece, to which its aversion to union naturally led, and a strong hand took control of affairs and so gave to the Greeks a material power which they were unable to acquire of themselves. Thereby their literary and scientific authority was able to prevail over the whole ancient world. Not only were peace and leisure obtained for study and experiment, but the scattered intellectual forces, thus combined, formed an impressive mass that stood without a rival. Its effect was felt in the East as well as in the West, though of course more extensively in the Roman empire, where there existed more curiosity and a readier capacity for absorbing the manifold results. But everywhere Greek physicians, for example, made their way, and carried with them more or less science and literature. The possible dependence of the Sanskrit drama upon the new Greek comedy, of which mention has been made, the authority of Aristotle wherever he became known, testify to the extent of Grecian fame in remote regions. Only in this way was Greece able to find expression in the literature of the world. The disintegration of individualism which in Greece seemed to lead only to divided effort was succeeded by a keen enthusiasm to which all modern literature and science have been deeply indebted.



## II.

The home of the new spirit that manifested itself in Greek literature was then Alexandria in Egypt, a city established by Alexander the



PTOLEMY I. AND HIS WIFE EURYDICE.

Great for his capital, which should serve as a connecting link between the cultivation of the Greeks and the Asiatic civilizations that had succumbed before his armies. The plan of the town he drew himself,

and it was worthy of the metropolis of his vast empire. The city was about fifteen miles long and four broad, and was advantageously situated for commerce. Its population was large, and included Jews, Greeks, and Egyptians, who dwelt in separate divisions of the city. Strangers from other quarters also flocked in large numbers to this first cosmopolitan center. On the early death of Alexander, this city, where his body was buried, fell to the share of Ptolemy the First—Soter, or Saviour, as he was called—one of the most prominent of the great general's Macedonian lieutenants, who founded a line that long ruled in this region. The Ptolemies were patrons of literature and art; the first of the line invited men of distinction from Greece to adorn his court, after the familiar fashion of Macedonian rulers. Poets and philosophers gathered around him, attracted by the most generous and flattering offers. Hegesias the Cyrenaic philosopher, Stilpo of Megara, Diodorus Cronus, Philetas the poet, Euclid the mathematician, Straton of Lampsacus, accepted his invitations, and naturally attracted others in their wake. Moreover, he or his successor,—for the testimony is conflicting,—made residence in Alexandria indispensable to scholars by the foundation of the library and the museum. The library was the storehouse of a rich mass of Greek literature; in the reign of the second Ptolemy—Ptolemy Philadelphus—it was combined with the museum, thus forming an institution of learning such as the world had never seen. This museum, or place dear to the muses, was apparently modeled on the similar philosophical schools which were to be found in almost every city in Greece. These places were the resort of men of letters, who found a pleasing shelter when, unable longer to share in public life, they could prosecute their favorite studies. Generally, a library was collected within; and without were gardens, groves, and walks; the place was further adorned with statues of gods and famous men, as were Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum. Those who resorted thither took their meals in common; sometimes they lived within its walls. These schools bore a close resemblance to the mediæval monasteries, where were found the same seclusion and security for the interests neglected by the outside world. Indeed, it may not be impossible to trace the influence of the museum at Alexandria, to some extent an outgrowth of the schools of the ancient philosophers, upon the monasteries themselves.

Thus the museum was much greater and more important than the various schools on which it was modeled, as the work that was done within its walls was of more lasting authority. It served as a sort of university, at which there assembled men of science, grammarians, critics, and students of every branch of learning. Instruction was given to the young, and every form of research was carried on by



competent investigators. The literature of the past was collected, read, revised, and put in order; catalogues were made, texts deciphered and explained. As a dying man is anxious to arrange his affairs, these later Greeks sought to leave the glories of the past civilization in perfect condition for their successors. The most eminent scholars were put in charge of the institution; the first was Zenodotus,



PTOLEMY II. AND ARSINOË.

the famous editor of the text of the Homeric poems; he was succeeded by Callimachus, Eratosthenes, Apollonius of Rhodes, Aristophanes of Byzantium, and Aristarchus. We shall see later that the claims of these men to admiration for their various contributions to the work of their time cover the various fields of literature, science, and research for which Alexandria was famous.

The building itself was generously equipped for various kinds of



work, with the addition of accommodations for relaxation. There was a grove in the inner courtyard, provided with abundant springs. On the side of this were porches, adorned with pictures, and here the students could meet and discuss various questions. In a large hall meals were provided; and probably there were lodging-rooms for the teachers and officials. The most important part was the library itself; another useful division was that where medicine and surgery were practised. A zoölogical garden may have been in close proximity, although its exact position is uncertain. Astronomical investigations might have been pursued on the roof of the large edifice, whither students resorted in large numbers to study under the celebrated men who here laid the foundations of scientific teaching. The number of the books accumulated there is uncertain; various estimates are to be found in different writings of the ancients; it doubtless contained the greater part of Greek literature, more definite statement can not be made. Even the round and large numbers of the manuscripts that it is said to have contained are unsatisfactory unless we know just how many of these would go to the making of a printed volume. We may only be sure that the books were many, and in general that the world had never seen before, and has never seen since, such generous provision for all manner of scientific and literary work.

The most striking quality of the period was its learning. The whole equipment of the place and the enthusiasm of those who gathered there ran in that direction. The whole literature felt the impulse of the new movement, and in the absence of other sources of inspiration began anew by making itself over after approved models; in other words, instead of being a natural growth, it began to be literary. Not that this change appeared suddenly, without forebodings, for nothing of the kind has ever happened by a violent movement. Even when a change in external circumstances has paved the way, old traditions survive, as in the languid American imitation of English models after a violent political rupture, or else the literature has long borne the marks that have made clear to later students how much the revolution was the final expression of a protracted struggle between new and old thoughts and ideas. In the later manifestations of the Greek drama, in the plays of Euripides and Menander, modern literature began. The former public spirit had faded away; the perfection of the art of Sophocles is a sign that the old form had reached its highest mark and was to be succeeded by another movement, and in this the old religious feeling had no place. The uncertainty, the unevenness of Euripides were the gropings of a man with a magnificent inheritance in Greek verse who was wandering

in the mazes of free thought that forbade his receiving any traditional explanation of the universe. He was the representative of the new spirit that knew nothing of authority, that set the human mind face to face with ethical problems which were not to be settled by any appeal to divine injunctions or warnings, but had to be solved by human efforts alone. Only in such an atmosphere could philosophy thrive, only when thought was free from authority could Plato utter the golden statement that it is better to suffer, than to do, injustice. In the contemporary tragedy we see reflected the struggle of men with these new questions, and then it is that individuals, with their strongly marked personal characteristics, make their appearance, taking the place formerly held by more or less ideal figures. This was the first step in the direction in which modern literature has made its most important advance. The change in comedy was very similar, namely, from the lofty teaching of Aristophanes to the acuter but narrower study of manners; the devotion to great principles being followed by a keen criticism of human nature, thus foretelling the departure from the old instruction to mere amusement.

### III.

The new literature of Alexandria was unable to go back to the homogeneity of early Athenian life, and it became the expression of the learning that was now the only form of intellectual excitement. All the approved methods were conscientiously followed: epics were manufactured with the same painful sincerity that at the present day is employed upon making old-fashioned furniture; elegies and lyrics were repeated with wonderful success; didactic poetry found its own home where science was beginning. The most important of these later poets was Theocritus, the Sicilian, whose bucolics sounded a fascinating note of nature amid this medley of artificialities. Of his life almost nothing is known, except that he was born at Syracuse, and that at some time or other—probably about 250 B.C.—he was at Alexandria. He is said, too, to have been a pupil of Philetas, but of him, as well as of Asclepiades and Lycidas—all known in antiquity as writers of verse—almost nothing but his name has come down to us.

The work of Theocritus as we have it consists of thirty idyls and almost as many epigrams, which were probably collected after his death by the grammarians. The genuineness of some pieces ascribed to Theocritus is contested by many editors, and, in some cases, on excellent grounds; but with few exceptions the different poems apparently belong to the same time and were the product of similar circum-



stances. His most important subject is rustic life,—whence the name *bucolics* often loosely applied to all the *idyls*,—which he treats in various ways that set forth the emotions, passions, and interests of shepherds. The origin of these representations of pastoral scenes is traced to Sicily, although in much Greek poetry, from Homer down, are to be found many graceful pictures of country life, partly due at first to vague memories of the nomadic existence that preceded the early civilization, and later to the contrast between the eager, artificial life of the city and the rather apparent than real simplicity and innocence of country-people. It was among the Alexandrines that its representatives first became a separate literary form, according to the law that has since been very often exemplified, that in a very conventional period men's tastes turn for refreshment to a deliberate imitation of nature; they do this exactly as in a hot summer day one seeks the cool shade. The term "nature" is as vague here, however, as it is everywhere, and in artificial times it becomes highly conventional, just as in the days of Louis XIV. the gardens were laid out in trim walks and parterres, and the trees were cut into formal shapes. Theocritus may well have heard shepherds singing together in friendly or angry rivalry, and singing with the grace that still lingers in modern Greek folk-songs; it was his merit that he gave it a place in literature, and that the time in which he lived was not wholly given up to purely artificial verse is proved by the many charming touches with which the poems are filled.

In some of his *idyls* Theocritus followed the early Sicilian mimics, or little pieces of dramatic action, without music or any of the formalities of the comedy, that caricatured or simply portrayed bits out of life; such was the one that represents the chattering women at the festival of Adonis, which will be found below. The one quality to be found in all that can be fairly ascribed to him is the brevity, the artistic conciseness of his work. The name *idyls*, from the Greek word meaning *little pictures*, is most fortunately chosen, for, as has been often said, the poems are like a gallery of *genre* pictures, and critics have often pointed out the close resemblance between many of the scenes that he describes and the Pompeian wall-paintings that are the only relics that we have of this branch of Alexandrine art, for the Romans copied the work of their more immediate predecessors in painting as well as letters.

Examples of the similarity are very common; thus, in his sixth *idyl*, Polyphemus, we are told, awaits a messenger from Galatea; this messenger would have been one of the countless figures of Eros who flourished in the Alexandrine paintings, dancing attendance, holding flowers, lifting a corner of drapery, in all the graceful



and suggestive attitudes for which their legitimate descendants, the modern Cupids of the valentine, are famous. More striking still is the description Moschus gives us of the Rape of Europa, whose attitude and gestures appear to be copied from what was a favorite and often repeated picture of the scene. "Europa, riding on the back of the divine bull, with one hand clasped the beast's great horn, and with



EUROPA RID-  
ING ON A  
BULL.

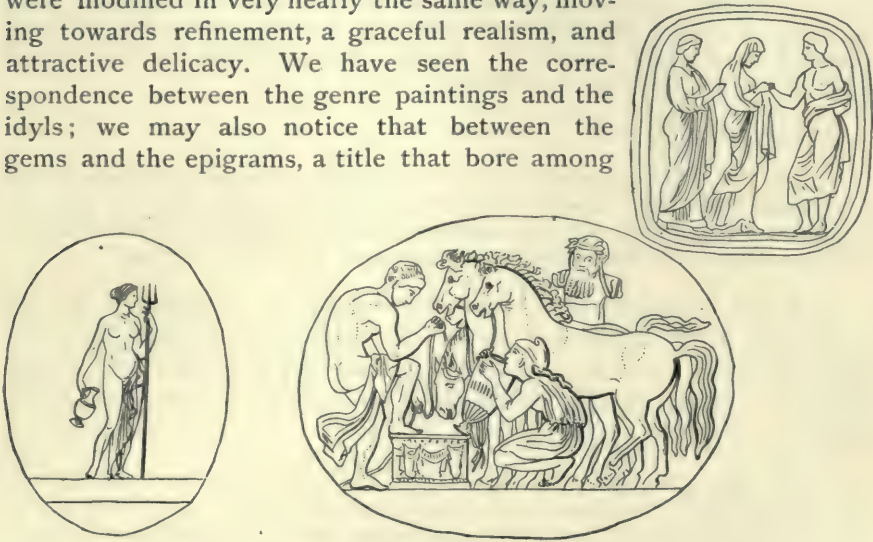
the other caught up her garment's purple fold, lest it should trail and be drenched in the spray of the sea. And her deep robe was blown out in the wind, like a ship's sail, and it wafted the maiden onward."

The whole scene as thus described is like an account of a picture.

It is not merely the fact of the resemblance between certain lines of the poems and certain paintings that needs to be pointed out, but rather the tendency common to the two arts towards the representation of minute circumstance. That they should move on parallel lines will surprise no one who has ever given the subject a moment's consideration, for history abounds with examples of similar coincidence. Some incidents have been already pointed out in this book, and others readily suggest themselves, such as that between the work of Hogarth and the vein of realism that appeared in the works of Fielding and Smollett in the last century. The new interest in the work of classical antiquity left its memorial in the paintings of the school of which David was the head, as well as in the poems of André Chénier, Landor, and the classical attempts of Goethe and Schiller. Millet recorded in painting the novel importance of the peasants as this had found expression in the poetry of Burns and in the tendency of modern politics. There is no need of multiplying instances to corroborate what has every qualification for its proper position as a trite commonplace save general acceptance. So strenuous have been the efforts to bind up the study of painting and writing as wholly separate entities that this most obvious truth has been often overlooked by men who have forgotten that all that men do is but the resultant of the countless influences of their time, and that thus is secured a striking similarity of result. That there should have been this resemblance between the poetry and the painting of Alexandria need not then surprise us, and that painting should have taken the lead is readily explicable.

The really great literature of Greece found its counterpart in the sculpture, where there breathes the same repose of perfect art; but both of these—or, to state it more exactly, all this—had died with the loss of political power, and the artistic utterances of Alexandria had their origin elsewhere. What had made Athens so great—the identity of

the citizen with the state was a condition that found no existence under the despotic rule of the Ptolemies, and the conditions most prominent were the opportunities for learning, and the wealth of the East then first opened to the Greeks. Before the end of the Athenian civilization; communication had begun, but it was the conquests of Alexander that made intercourse generally possible, and at once traces of Asiatic influence made their appearance in decorative art, exactly as the opening of Japan has affected the art of all modern civilized peoples. Oriental dress became common, metal work, vases, paintings, all felt the change; a new spur was given to Greek art, and Alexandria learned to know something that bore a great likeness to modern luxury with its far-reaching cosmopolitanism. Literature expressed the change as well as the fine arts, and the two forms of expression were modified in very nearly the same way, moving towards refinement, a graceful realism, and attractive delicacy. We have seen the correspondence between the genre paintings and the idyls; we may also notice that between the gems and the epigrams, a title that bore among



GEMS OF ALEXANDRINE EPOCH.

the ancients not the significance that it has with us, but merely that of an inscription. The Alexandrines excelled in the gem and the epigram, and at the same time. Both called for the same qualities: grace, facility of execution, and conciseness, and these were all to be found in this new home of letters and the arts, where men had no serious message to deliver, and were free to bring into their work all the refinement that learning could furnish, and the strong note of individuality that took the place of the great general principles that Greece uttered to the world. We shall see later in what respects the Alexandrine epigram differed from the earlier models; it is sufficient



to point out here the same similarity to the contemporary gem that we may notice to-day between the common forms of exotic household decoration and the fantastic forms of verse that delight our poets.

Certainly in Theocritus there are abundant instances of grace and facility. Everything is nearly in miniature; miniature epic, as in the twenty-fifth idyl recounting some of the deeds of Heracles; miniature drama, as in the fourteenth, wherein Æschines describes his quarrel with his mistress, to say nothing of the brief pastorals; and in all the effect of vivid reality is produced by the lightest touches. Thus, Castor and Polydeuces, in the twenty-second idyl,—

CASTOR AND POLYDEUCES (POLLUX).

"Went wandering alone, apart from their fellows, and marvelling at all the various wildwood on the mountain. Beneath a smooth cliff they found an ever-flowing spring filled with the purest water, and the pebbles shone like crystal or silver from the deep. Tall fir-trees grew thereby, and white poplars and planes, and cypresses with their lofty tufts of leaves, and there bloomed all fragrant flowers that fill the meadows when early summer is waning—dear worksteads of the hairy bees."

Again in the fifth:

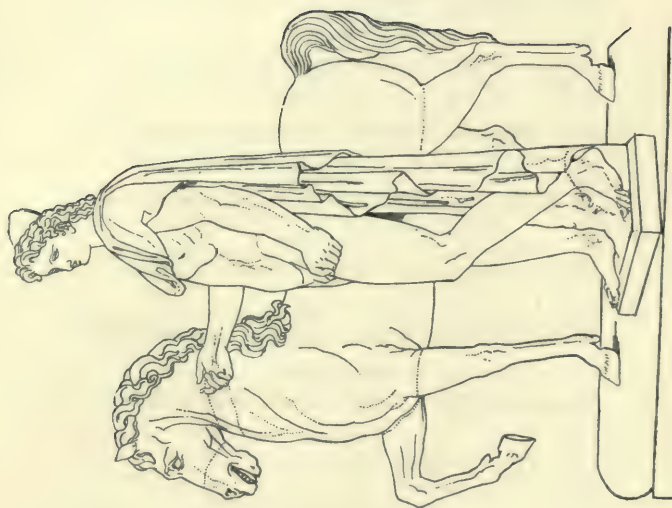
"Here be oak-trees, and here the galingale, and sweetly here hum the bees about the hives. There are two waves of chill water, and on the tree the birds are warbling, and the shadow is beyond compare with that where thou liest, and from on high the pine-tree pelts us with her cones."

And his dramatic skill is as marked as his descriptive, as the specimens given below will show. To prove the fascinations of his style one need scarcely to add to those further examples. Yet, how graceful is the artifice here with which mythology and observation are mingled:

"Never was Heracles apart from Hylas, not when mid-noon was high in heaven, not when Dawn with her white horses speeds upwards to the dwelling of Zeus, not when the twittering nestlings look towards the perch, while their mother flaps her wings above the smoke-browned beam; and all this that the lad might be fashioned to his mind, and might drive a straight furrow, and come to the true measure of man."

But there would be no end of the quotations that might establish, what is already sufficiently obvious, that he who introduced pastoral poetry into literature had the charm of naturalness above those who have imitated him. The characters of his idyls possess a reality which not all his rivals have caught; they have done their best to make their shepherds superfine. Those of Theocritus wore the skin of the he-goat; they pricked their feet on thorns; ever since then they have worn rich clothes and have protected their feet with red-heeled shoes, as they have gradually dwindled away into the choruses of the Italian





CATOR AND POLYDEUCES (POLLUX).

opera. Even Bion and Moschus, who were apparently his contemporaries, fall far short of him. We are far from Sicily and near Alexandria when we read their sophisticated poems. Of Bion we have a Lament for Adonis which might have been sung at the festival described in the fifteenth idyl of Theocritus, a fragment of a poem about the youth of Achilles, and a few other idyllic bits about the Loves and Spring,—all charming; of Moschus, the Rape of Europa, the Lament for Bion, the earliest of a long line of pastoral elegies; a dialogue between the mother and wife of Heracles, and a handful of smaller fragments. Of the lives of these later men we know nothing except—from Moschus's Lament—that Bion died from poison; but their work, while it seems to show traces of the influence of Theocritus, is also full of the spirit of Alexandria.

## IV.

## THE TWO WORKMEN.

MILO.

Well, my poor ploughman, and what ails thee now?  
 Thy furrow lies not even as of yore:  
 Thy fellows leave behind thy lagging plough,  
 As the flock leaves a ewe whose feet are sore:  
 By noon and midday what will be thy plight  
 If now, so soon, thy coulter fails to bite?

BATTUS.

Hewn from hard rocks, untired at set of sun,  
 Milo, didst ne'er regret some absent one?

MILO.

Not I. What time have workers for regret?

BATTUS.

Hath love ne'er kept thee from thy slumbers yet?

MILO.

Nay, heaven forbid! If once the cat taste cream!

BATTUS.

Milo, these ten days love hath been my dream.

MILO.

You drain your wine, while vinegar's scarce with me.

BATTUS.

Hence since last spring untrimmed my borders be.

MILO.

And what lass flouts thee?

BATTUS.

She whom we heard play  
 Amongst Hippocoön's reapers yesterday.

MILO.

Your sins have found you out — you're e'en served right :  
You'll clasp a corn-crake in your arms all night.

BATTUS.

You laugh : but headstrong Love is blind no less  
Than Plutus : talking big is foolishness.

MILO.

I don't talk big. But lay the corn-ears low  
And sing the while some love-song — easier so  
Will seem your toil : you used to sing, I know.

BATTUS.

Maids of Pieria, of my slim lass sing !  
One touch of yours ennobles everything.

[*Sings.*] My sweet ! on thy complexion men remark ;  
Call thee shrunk, swart : I call thee olive-brown.  
Violets and pencilled hyacinths are dark,  
Yet first of flowers they're chosen for a crown.  
As goats pursue the clover, wolves the goat,  
And cranes the ploughman, upon thee I dote.  
  
Had I but Cræsus' wealth, we twain should stand,  
Gold-sculptured, in Love's temple : thou should'st play  
Thy pipe, a rose or apple in thy hand,  
I flaunt my minstrel's robe and sandals gay.  
Bombyca ! twinkling ebony are thy feet,  
Honey thy mouth, thy ways none knows how sweet !

MILO.

Fine verses can this unknown herdsman make —  
How shone the artist in each measured line !  
Why, lad, that beard grew on thee by mistake !  
List to this stave, by Lytierse the divine.

[*Sings.*] O rich in fruit and cornblade : be this field  
Tilled well, Demeter, and fair fruitage yield !  
  
Bind the sheaves, reapers : lest one, passing, say —  
'A fig for these, they're never worth their pay.'  
  
Let the mown swathes look northward, ye who mow,  
Or westward — for the ears grow fattest so.  
  
Avoid a noontide nap, ye threshing men :  
The chaff flies thickest from the corn-ears then.  
  
Wake when the lark wakes ; when he slumbers, close  
Your work, ye reapers : and at noontide doze.  
  
Boys, the frogs' life for me ! They need not him  
Who fills the flagon, for in drink they swim.  
  
Better boil herbs, thou toiler after gain,  
Than, splitting cummin, split thy hand in twain.  
  
This that I've sung thee, ploughman, is a tune  
For men to sing that swelter in the sun.  
Thy meagre love-tale is a thing to croon  
In thy mamma's ear when her dreams are done.



## ID. XV.

## THE TWO LADIES OF SYRACUSE.

GORG. — PRAXINOA.

GORG.

Is Dame Praxinoa in?

PRAXINOA.

Yes, Gorgo dear.

How late you are — the only marvel is  
 You're here at all! Quick, Eunoa, find a chair  
 And fling a cushion on it.

GORG.

Thanks.

PRAXINOA.

Sit down.

GORG.

Oh what a thing is spirit! Here I am,  
 Praxinoa, safe at last from all that crowd  
 And all those chariots . . . every street a mass  
 Of boots and soldiers' jackets! . . . Oh! the road  
 Seemed endless . . . and you live so far away!

PRAXINOA.

This land's-end den — for dwelling it is not —  
 My madcap hired to keep us 'twain apart  
 And stir up strife. 'Twas like him, odious pest!

GORG.

Nay, call not, dear, your lord, your Deinon, names  
 To the babe's face. Look how it stares at you.

PRAXINOA.

There, baby sweet, I never meant Papa!

GORG.

It understands, by'r lady! dear Papa!

PRAXINOA.

Well, yesterday (that means what day you like)  
 'Papa' had rouge and hair-powder to buy;  
 He brought back salt! this oaf of six-foot-one.

GORG.

Just such another is that pickpocket  
 My Diocleides! He bought t'other day  
 Six fleeces at seven drachms, his last exploit.  
 What were they? Scraps of worn-out pedlar's-bags,  
 Sheer trash.—But put your gown and kirtle on;  
 And we'll to Ptolemy's, the sumptuous king,  
 To see the *Adonis*. As I hear, the queen  
 Provides us entertainment of the best.

PRAXINOA.

The grand can do things grandly. Tell me more,  
 You that have seen: be eyes unto the blind.

GORG0.

'Twere time we went — but all time's holiday  
With idlers.

PRAXINOA.

Eunoa, pampered minx, the jug!  
Set it down here — you cats would sleep all day  
On cushions — stir yourself, fetch water, quick!  
Water's our first want. How she holds the jug!  
Now, pour — not, cormorant, in that wasteful way —  
You've drenched my dress, bad luck t' you! There,  
enough:

I have made such toilet as my fates allowed.  
Now for the key o' the plate-chest. Bring it, quick!

GORG0.

My dear, that full pelisse becomes you well.  
What did it stand you in, straight off the loom?

PRAXINOA.

Don't ask me, Gorgo: two good pounds and more.  
Then I gave all my mind to trimming it.

GORG0.

Well, 'tis a great success. Where have you left  
My mantle, Eunoa, and my parasol?  
Arrange me nicely. Babe, you'll bide at home:  
Horses might eat you, ghosts! — yes, cry your fill,  
But we won't have you maimed. Now let's be off.  
You, Phrygia, take and nurse the tiny thing:  
Call the dog in: make fast the outer door.

PRAXINOA.

Gods! what a crowd! How, when shall we get past  
This nuisance, these unending ant-like swarms?  
Yet, Ptolemy, we owe thee thanks for much  
Since heaven received thy sire! No miscreant now  
Creeps Thug-like up, to maul the passer-by.  
What games men played erewhile—men shaped in crime,  
Birds of a feather, rascals every one!  
— We're done for, Gorgo darling—here they are,  
The Royal horse! Sweet sir, don't trample me!  
That bay—the savage!—reared up straight on end!  
Fly, Eunoa, can't you! Doggedly she stands.  
He'll be his rider's death!—How glad I am  
My babe's at home.

GORG0.

Praxinoa, never mind!  
See, we're before them now, and they're in line.

PRAXINOA.

There, I'm myself. But from a child I feared  
Horses and slimy snakes. But haste we on:  
A surging multitude is close behind.

GORG0 [*to Old Lady*].

From the palace, mother?

OLD LADY.

Ay, child.

GORG0.

Is it fair

Of access?

OLD LADY.

Trying brought the Greeks to Tróy.  
Young ladies, they must try who would succeed.

GORG0.

The crone hath said her oracle and gone.  
Women know all — how Adam married Eve.  
— Praxinoa, look what crowds are round the door!

PRAXINOA.

Fearful. Your hand, please, Gorgo. Eunoa, you  
Hold Eutyclus — hold tight or you'll be lost.  
We'll enter in a body — hold us fast!  
Oh dear, my muslin dress is torn in two,  
Gorgo, already! Pray, good gentleman,  
(And happiness be yours) respect my robe!

STRANGER.

I could not if I would — nathless I will.

PRAXINOA.

They come in hundreds, and they push like swine.

STRANGER.

Lady, take courage: it is all well now.

PRAXINOA.

And now and ever be it well with thee,  
Sweet man, for shielding us! An honest soul  
And kindly. Oh! we're smothering Eunoa:  
Fight your way, trembler! Good! 'We're all in now,'  
As quoth the goodman, and shut out his wife.

GORG0.

Praxinoa, look! Note well this broidery first.  
How exquisitely fine — too good for earth!  
Empress Athene, what strange sempstress wrought  
Such work? What painter painted, realized  
Such pictures? Just like life they stand or move,  
Facts and not fancies! What a thing is man!  
How bright, how lifelike on his silvern couch  
Lies, with youth's bloom scarce shadowing his cheek,  
That dear Adonis, lovely e'en in death!

A STRANGER.

Bad luck t' you, cease your senseless pigeon's prate!  
Their brogue is killing — every word a drawl.

GORG0.

Whence did he spring from? What is it to thee  
If we two prattle? Order, sir, your slaves:  
You're ordering Syracusan ladies now!  
Corinthians bred (to tell you one fact more)  
As was Bellerophon: islanders in speech,  
For Dorians may talk Doric, I presume?

PRAXINOA.

Persephone! Our master's yet unborn.  
I've but one terror, lest he soil my gown.



GORG0.

Hush, dear, Argeia's daughter's going to sing  
*The Adonis*: that accomplished vocalist  
 Who has no rival in "*The Sailor's Grave*."  
 Mark her coquetting with her music now.

*Song.*

Queen, who lov'st Golgi and the Sicel hill  
 And Ida; Aphrodite radiant-eyed;  
 The dainty-footed Hours from Acheron's rill  
 Brought once again Adonis to thy side.  
 How changed in twelve short months! They travel slow,  
 Those precious Hours: we hail their advent still,  
 For blessings do they bring to all below.  
 O Sea-born! thou didst erst, or legend lies,  
 Shed on a woman's soul thy grace benign,  
 And Berenice's dust immortalize.  
 O called by many names, at many a shrine!  
 For thy sweet sake doth Berenice's child  
 (Herself a second Helen) deck with all  
 That's fair, Adonis. On his right are piled  
 Ripe apples fallen from the oak-tree tall;  
 And silver caskets at his left support  
 Toy-gardens, Syrian scents enshrined in gold  
 And alabaster, cakes of every sort  
 That in their ovens the pastrywomen mould,  
 When with white meal they mix all flowers that bloom,  
 Oil-cakes and honey-cakes. There stand portrayed  
 Each bird, each butterfly; and in the gloom  
 Of foliage climbing high, and downward weighed  
 By graceful blossoms, do the young Loves play  
 Like nightingales, and perch on every tree,  
 And flit, to try their wings, from spray to spray.  
 Then see the gold, the ebony! O see  
 The ivory-carven eagles, bearing up  
 To Zeus the boy who fills his royal cup!  
 Soft as a dream, such tap'stry gleams o'erhead  
 As the Milesian's self would gaze on, charmed.  
 But sweet Adonis hath his own sweet bed:  
 Next Aphrodite sleeps the roseate-armed,  
 A bridegroom of eighteen or nineteen years.  
 Kiss the smooth boyish lip — there's no sting there!  
 The bride hath found her own: all bliss be hers!  
 And him at dewy dawn we'll troop to bear  
 To where the breakers hiss against the shore:  
 There, with dishevelled dress and unbound hair,  
 Bare-bosomed all, our descant wild we'll pour:

"Thou haunt'st, Adonis, earth and heaven in turn,  
 Alone of heroes. Agamemnon ne'er  
 Could compass this, nor Aias stout and stern:  
 Not Hector, eldest-born of her who bare  
 Ten sons, not Patrocles, nor safe-retained  
 From Ilium Pyrrhus, such distinction earned;  
 Nor, elder yet, the sons of Lapithæ,  
 Of Pelops and Deucalion, and the crown  
 Of Greece, Pelasgians. Gracious may'st thou be,  
 Adonis, now: pour new-year's blessings down!  
 Right welcome dost thou come, Adonis dear:  
 Come when thou wilt, thou'lt find a welcome here."



GORG0.

'Tis fine, Praxinoa ! How I envy her  
Her learning, and still more her luscious  
voice !

We must go home : my husband's sup-  
perless :

And, in that state, he's simply vinegar.  
Don't cross his path when hungry ! So  
farewell,

Adonis, and be housed 'mid welfare aye !

## THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS.

Woe, woe for Adonis, he hath perished,  
the beauteous Adonis, dead is the beauteous  
Adonis, the Loves join in the lament. No  
more in thy purple raiment, Cypris, do thou  
sleep ; arise, thou wretched one, sable-  
stoled, and beat thy breasts, and say to all,  
'he hath perished, the lovely Adonis !'

*Woe, woe for Adonis, the Loves join in the  
lament !*

Low on the hills is lying the lovely  
Adonis, and his thigh with the boar's tusk,  
his white thigh with the boar's tusk is  
wounded, and sorrow on Cypris he brings,  
as softly he breathes his life away.

His dark blood drips down his skin of  
snow, beneath his brows his eyes wax heavy  
and dim, and the rose flees from his lip, and  
thereon the very kiss is dying, the kiss that  
Cypris will never forego.

To Cypris his kiss is dear, though he  
lives no longer, but Adonis knew not that  
she kissed him as he died.

*Woe, woe for Adonis, the Loves join in the  
lament !*

A cruel, cruel wound on his thigh hath  
Adonis, but a deeper wound in her heart  
doth Cytherea bear. About him his dear  
hounds are loudly baying, and the nymphs  
of the wild wood wail him ; but Aphrodite  
with unbound locks through the glades  
goes wandering,—wretched, with hair un-  
braided, with feet unsandaled, and the thorns  
as she passes wound her and pluck the blos-  
som of her sacred blood. Shrill she wails  
as down the long woodlands she is borne,  
lamenting her Assyrian lord, and again  
calling him, and again. But round his  
navel the dark blood leapt forth, with blood  
from his thighs his chest was scarlet, and  
beneath Adonis' breast, the spaces that  
afore were snow-white, were purple with  
blood.

*Woe, woe for Cytherea, the Loves join in  
the lament !*



She hath lost her lovely lord, with him she hath lost her sacred beauty. Fair was the form of Cypris, while Adonis was living, but her beauty has died with Adonis. *Woe, woe for Cypris*, the mountains all are saying, and the oak-trees answer, *woe for Adonis*. And the rivers bewail the sorrows of Aphrodite, and the wells are weeping Adonis on the mountains. The flowers flush red for anguish, and Cytherea through all the mountain-knees, through every dell, doth shrill the piteous dirge.

*Woe, woe for Cytherea, he hath perished, the lovely Adonis.*

#### THE LAMENT FOR BION.

Wail, let me hear you wail, ye woodland glades, and thou Dorian water; and weep ye rivers, for Bion, the well-beloved! Now all ye green things mourn, and now ye groves lament him, ye flowers now in sad clusters breathe yourselves away. Now reddened ye roses in your sorrow, and now wax red ye wind-flowers, now thou hyacinth, whisper the letters on thee engraved, and add a deeper *ai ai* to thy petals; he is dead, the beautiful singer.

*Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.*

Ye nightingales that lament among the thick leaves of the trees, tell ye to the Sicilian waters of Arethusa the tidings that Bion the herdsman is dead, and that with Bion song too has died, and perished hath the Dorian minstrelsy.

*Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.*

Ye Strymonian swans, sadly wail ye by the waters, and chant with melancholy notes the dolorous song, even such a song as in his time with voice like yours he was wont to sing. And tell again to the Egeian maidens, tell to all the Nymphs Bistonian, how that he hath perished, the Dorian Orpheus.

*Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.*

No more to his herds he sings, that beloved herdsman, no more 'neath the lonely oak he sits and sings, nay, but by Pluteus' side he chants a refrain of oblivion. The mountains too are voiceless: and the heifers by the bulls that wander lament and refuse their pasture.

*Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.*

Thy sudden doom, oh Bion, Apollo himself lamented, and the Satyrs mourned thee, and the Priapi in sable raiment, and the Panes sorrow for thy song, and the fountain-fairies in the wood made moan, and their tears turned to rivers of waters. And Echo in the rocks laments that thou art silent, and no more she mimics thy voice. And in sorrow for thy fall the trees cast down their fruit, and all the flowers have faded. From the ewes hath flowed no fair milk, nor honey from the hives, nay, it hath perished for mere sorrow in the wax, for now hath thy honey perished, and no more it behoves men to gather the honey of the bees.

*Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.*

Not so much did the dolphin mourn beside the sea-banks, nor ever sang so sweet the nightingale on the cliffs, nor so much lamented the swallow on the long ranges of the hills, nor shrilled so loud the halcyon o'er his sorrows;

*(Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.)*

Nor so much, by the grey sea waves, did ever the sea-bird sing, nor so much in the dells of the dawn did the bird of Memnon bewail the son of the Morning, fluttering around his tomb, as they lamented for Bion dead.

Nightingales, and all the swallows that once he was wont delight, that he would teach to speak, they sat over against each other on the boughs and kept moaning, and the birds sang in answer 'Wail, ye wretched ones, even ye!'



## CHAPTER II.—THE POETRY.—*Continued.*

I.—The Relation of the New Movement to the Later Condition of Athens. Changed Treatment of Women, and their Influence. The Pastorals and Elegies. Antimachus. The Growth of Literary Art, and Various Writers of Forgotten Fame. II.—Callimachus. The Lyric Poetry. The Drama. III.—The Epic Writers. Apollonius Rhodius, and his *Argonautics*; its Influence on Roman Writers. The Didactic Poets: Aratus, Nicander, etc., etc. Some Minor Writers of Verse. IV.—Nonnus, and his Learned Epic. Musæus. V.—Quintus Smyrnæus, and his Unexpected Vigor. The Gradual Dwindling of Poetry. VI.—The Anthology. Its Gradual Formation. Its Abundance. The Epigram. VII.—Extracts from the Anthology.

### I.

THE spirit of Alexandria, very naturally, was but the full development of what had made its appearance in the preparatory enfeeblement of the Athenian power. We saw in examining the work of Euripides the new way in which the gods were treated, and the continual tendency towards diminishing the difference between them and human beings, as well as the growing prominence of personal characteristics in the human heroes and heroines. The heroic passions, which were necessarily abstract because they dealt with the needs of such abstractions as the state, vanished with the growth of political hopefulness, to be succeeded by a greater interest in the emotions of the separate individuals. As the controlling bonds that held the citizens together were loosened, their own interests became prominent and found expression in literature, and what was indicated by Euripides became the sole motive in Alexandria. In the last of the three great Athenian tragedians we noticed how much stress was laid on love. Aristophanes perceived the change; in the *Frogs* he lets Æschylus boast that he had never brought a woman in love upon the stage, and although Sophocles could not have said the same thing, the love that he represented was distinctly a heroic passion, while in Euripides it became, as we saw, a leading subject. Phedrus and Hippolyta, Perseus and Andromeda, Meleager and Atalanta, Jason and Medea, Protesialaus and Laodameia, at once suggest themselves as examples of the tragedian's manifold treatment of the passion, as it showed itself in unmarried girls or married women, employing mythological stories, but giving them a human treatment. In comedy a similar change took place; we have the testimony of both Plutarch

and Ovid that all his plays treated love, and it is one of the most important elements of all the Alexandrine poetry.

In the new capital women escaped from many of the bonds that had weighed heavy upon them in the Athenian civilization which granted them few privileges, but demanded that they should busy themselves with housekeeping alone. There are a thousand indications of this great social change; whereas we find in Euripides frequent expressions of the duty of women to keep at home or to go out only under the escort of a slave,—so often indeed is this advice repeated that one is led to suppose that the rule was often broken—whereas, in the idyl of Theocritus quoted above, Gorgo and Praxinoa are represented as going forth unaccompanied to see the festival of Adonis, falling into talk with an unknown man without embarrassment, after a fashion impossible in any picture of Athenian life. Women,



GIRLS READING.

too, at this time became active in political intrigues, and the literature is full of references indicating their growing importance. We hear of them devoting themselves to study, writing poetry, and painting pictures.

It is clear that these changes helped to bring into prominence everything that had to do with the widened influence of women, and love with all its various complications became a main source of inspiration with Alexandrine writers. We have seen how much was made of it by the poets in their pastorals; in the elegies, too, we find it holding a leading place. For a long time this form of composition had lost the importance that belonged to it before the Persian war, and when the drama arose, with its fuller significance, the elegy shriveled into the epigram or became the vehicle of mere personal

interest. We hear for some time of no one famous writer of elegies, yet they were still composed by some of the men who acquired fame in other ways, with their lyrics or tragedies, and they formed a literary accomplishment of orators, philosophers, and statesmen, thus occupying very much the same position as translations of the Greek and Roman classics still hold among men who rest their reputation on very different things. Time has discreetly winnowed out most of these domestic compositions, and we have but little left of the elegies of Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristotle. Fragments survive of the work of Ion of Chios, Dionysius Chaleus of Athens, Ennius of Paros, a sophist, and Kritias of Athens, the well-known statesman; none, however, convey a message of great importance, but are rather of the nature of a host's encouragement to his guests, while some express the political opinions of their writers.

Of far higher reputation was Antimachus of Colophon, who flourished about 400 B.C., at the end of the Peloponnesian war, and it is interesting to see how much he was affected by the change already noticed in the poetical literature of the time. His most famous elegiac composition in this sort was a series of elegies collected under the name of Lyde, after the real or imaginary mistress whose charms and coyness inspired his busy pen. Already Mimnermus, two centuries earlier, had given the name of his mistress, Nanno, to some of the elegies in which he bemoaned with all the sadness of the Ionians his own unhappiness, the brevity of human life, and the swift flight of its joys. But what the earlier writer did naturally, Antimachus is said to have done with artifice; instead of using the emotions for the production of literature, he used literary memories for the purpose of kindling emotion, and made a complete statement of the sufferings of others, consoling himself for her death by the vastness of his learning, which enabled him to recall those heroes of antiquity who had suffered like bereavements. Instead of describing his own despair he narrated theirs, and drew comfort, so Plutarch tells us, from the abundance of his knowledge. Even if—which is unlikely—this statement is a mere anecdote, it yet portrays with indubitable accuracy the widespread and perhaps the most characteristic trait of Alexandrine poetry, namely, the disposition to let classical reminiscences be the current form of literary expression, as if the people of this foreign land felt it necessary to give constant proof of their legitimate descent from Greece. Political, social, religious interest had been lost; there remained only literary culture which busied itself with a husk of fine words and charming phrases. We have known men in these later days who have thought that the sole profit to be derived from the study of the classics was the ability to



quote; this feeble sentiment is a faint echo of the literary enthusiasm of Alexandria, which valued this form of accomplishment above everything and made it for a long time the most valuable test of cultivation.

This method of treatment, which substituted learning for the lyric passion of the first writers of elegies, soon took the lead among the Alexandrines and among the Romans, their close imitators. Thus Antimachus and Euripides are the forerunners of the change appearing in literature. Of the writings of Philetas of Cos, already mentioned as an instructor of Theocritus, very little has come down to us, and of his life we have but mere scraps of information, that he took charge of the education of the son of Ptolemy Soter in 294 B.C. Apparently then he had a reputation for learning, and this hypothesis is borne out by what little of his work has escaped ruin. These fragments indicate a mastery of versification, and it is curious to notice in them some of the characteristics of a mature civilization. The resemblance of Alexandrinism to our own condition at the present day has been often pointed out; the reader will recall Mr. Stedman's ingenious parallel between Theocritus and Tennyson in his "Victorian Poets," and here we find Philetas falling into line as a representative of a ripe, nearly over-ripe period. Thus, he lent a new grace to the long-used metres, employing the familiar forms with the facility of a school that inherits long practice, like the later mediæval poets, the last of the Elizabethans, and those contemporary poets whose control of the vehicle of expression is superior to the importance of their message. Again, we find traces of the employment by Philetas of long words, a favorite device of the Alexandrines, and one that in its modern form will be recognized by every reader of Rossetti: *e.g.*,

"Powers of the impassioned hours prohibited."

Philetas, too, employed other devices for procuring sonority, such as assonance, rare words, and new phrases, whereby he secured the unanimous praise of his successors and the honor of frequent imitation, notably by the Latin poet Propertius. Similar traits distinguished other Alexandrine writers of elegies, as Phanocles and Hermesianax. Fortunately, a fragment of the last-named writer, containing nearly a hundred lines, has been preserved in that storehouse of curiosities, the works of Athenæus, and from this longest representative of the Alexandrine elegies we may corroborate the opinion already formed of their general condition. Hermesianax sings love-ditties, and in this extract he proves the dignity of the lover by giving a list of his fellow-sufferers in the long roll of Greek literature. Thus, Homer, he tells an incredulous world, sang of Ithaca, because he was

consumed by love of Penelope; his own sufferings inspired him. Hesiod was another victim of the tender passion. Socrates was the rejected lover of Aspasia. Alcæus, Mimnernus, and Antimachus obviously found a place in his list. Probably, if any one had been anxious to give us a specimen of the mingled pedantry and amorous elegance of the school, he could not have found a more characteristic extract than this. The school was certainly moving far away from the models set by the early elegiasts; yet, since pedantry cannot thrive away from the worship of antiquity, Hesiod enjoyed extreme popularity among the Alexandrines. Hermesianax called him the master of all learning, while Callimachus entitled him the sweetest of poets. It is not hard to see what it was that seemed to them admirable; in some of his work that has disappeared he collected a number of stories concerning famous heroines after a fashion that appealed directly to these later students.

Phanocles sang, too, of the power of love, and it is interesting to notice how much of modern poetry is closely connected with the work of the Alexandrines. The reader will recall the famous lines in Milton's *Lycidas*:

"What could the muse herself that Orpheus bore,  
The muse herself, for her enchanting son  
Whom universal Nature did lament;  
When by the rout that made the hideous roar,  
His gory visage down the stream was sent,  
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?"

These lines hand down to us the tradition which, so far at least as our definite knowledge goes, was first treated by Phanocles, whom Virgil again imitated in his *Georgics*, where the same story is recounted in plaintive verse.

Alexander of Etolia was another writer of elegies, and like most of his contemporaries he also tried his hand at other forms of poetical composition. He was one of the seven tragic poets who composed the Alexandrine pleiad, and he won fame as an epic bard, besides being known as a grammarian. But a fragment of his work remains. A similar fate has fallen on the work of Eratosthenes (276-146 B.C.), who had charge of the library of Alexandria and acquired deserved fame for his astronomical and geographical investigations. He was also known as a philosopher and historian. These severer studies did not render him insensible to the demands of literature. Besides measuring the earth and the sun, and raising geography and chronology to the rank of sciences, he wrote an epic poem on *Hermes*, and an elegy, *Erigone*. His versatility throws much light on the intellectual enthusiasm then existing.



## II.

The most important, however, of all these writers of elegies was Callimachus of Cyrene, who died about 240 B.C. He wrote in prose as well as in verse, composing the first full history of Greek literature, and a variety of other books, of which only the names have survived. His elegies have been scarcely more fortunate, although their popularity at the time and among the Romans, who imitated them freely, was very great. Yet, we do know what was the most admired form of that day, and the one on the hair of Berenice which was translated by Catullus may serve as an example of the lavish and extravagant invention and compliment that seemed the height of poetical excellence. Berenice, the wife of Ptolemy Euergetes, had made a vow to consecrate to Aphrodite a lock of her hair, in case her husband should return in safety from a campaign against the Assyrians. Her prayers had been granted, Ptolemy returned unharmed, the lock was duly devoted to the goddess, when Conon, an astronomer, probably the court-astronomer, announced that he had seen it in the sky metamorphosed into a new constellation. This is the subject of the poem, and its far-fetched flattery, its curious mixture of compliment and science, bring us into the very air of Alexandria. Artifice is absolutely triumphant here: mountains, Callimachus sings, have yielded before steel, what could a poor lock of hair do? Such was the argument, repeated by Pope in his *Rape of the Lock*, that marked how poetry had become a matter of ingenuity. Learning was never in stranger company.



PTOLEMY AND BERENICE.

From this specimen it is not difficult to imagine what was the nature of the lost elegies of Callimachus. Fragments corroborate what is the natural presumption that is inspired by this specimen, and by what is left of the work of his immediate predecessors and contemporaries. Yet, even if what we have fails to arouse keen poetical delight, we may yet regret that so little of his writings have escaped ruin. Although it was he who said that a great book is a great evil, perhaps because he said it, he wrote a vast number of short ones, no less than eight hundred, we are told. The most famous was the *Aitia*, a collection of elegies in which he recounted a number of legends, and undertook to explain the recondite allusions that they contained to his readers, who must have begun to lose their familiarity with them. Here, too, it will be noticed, we may observe the scientific tendency of the time.

Some of the hymns of Callimachus are extant, but whether their



survival is due to chance, or on account of their greater popularity, is obscure. They are for the most part frosty work, full of curious mythological lore, recounted often with dramatic vividness and literary care, but full of the marks of a period of decadence. The subjects were of the customary sort: Zeus, Apollo, Artemis, Delos, Demeter, the Bath of Pallas, and we come across traces of the influence that came from the so-called Homeric hymns, but the most distinctly marked quality is the workmanship of Callimachus. Some of the epigrams and a piece of an epic of this writer will be spoken of later.

We have almost nothing left of the lyric poetry of the Alexandrines, and indeed in ancient Greece this form of verse had lost its old significance since the development of the drama. Yet even there it had not wholly died, although it underwent a change which carried it far from its earlier nature. We left it at its perfection in the hands of Pindar, surviving in Thebes, and so outside of the intellectual movement that was making itself felt in Athens. Its perfection foreboded the change which was inevitable as tragedy took its place, and the old form was much modified by its new and greater rival. It is Melanippides of Melos who is mentioned as the first to introduce the changes. He lived at about the middle of the fifth century, and was honored by an attack of the writer of comedies, Pherecrates, for abandoning the old music and substituting the new, for Aristophanes was not the only comedian to believe that the cause of morality demanded conservatism in music. Plato in his Republic expressed similar opinions. Philoxenus of Cythera was denounced in the same way. He flourished about 400 B.C., and lived at one part of his life in Sicily, at the court of Dionysius, where he learned the disadvantages of despotism by being cast into prison. Why he was thus punished is uncertain amid a variety of conflicting explanations, although the usual statement is that he refused to admire the tyrant's poems. The subject of one of his own poems was the love of Cyclops for Galatea, a theme employed by Theocritus, it will be remembered. Other corrupters of music were Cinesias and Phrynis; more important than either was Timotheus the Milesian, 446-357 B.C., whose musical innovations brought him trouble more severe than the abuse of the conservative writers of comedies. He ventured to add additional strings to the cithara, which Terpander had provided with seven, and on taking one of his improved instruments to a musical contest in Sparta he had it snatched from his hands by an enraged magistrate, who tore off the new strings and hung up the instrument as a warning to future inventors. The story retains its Spartan flavor in its continuation, which says that he was officially censured for dishonoring ancient music, as well as for his unworthy and modern treatment of the myth he sang. Whether these state-

ments are true or not, there is abundant proof that the change in the art was great and provocative of discussion. In his hands the music became mimetic, thereby winning for him a reputation as something scarcely better than a blasphemer. Yet, if Plato and Lacedæmonian elders blamed, Euripides praised, and the new musicians proved that he formed a true estimate of the music of the future. Telestes, Ion, Diagoras, Licymnius, Crexus, all followed in the path he pursued, and broke away from the old bonds. Even this new development had nearly died out without reaching Alexandria, and just as the music had undergone a series of changes that destroyed its old rigid divisions, so the poetry had become modified, as we have seen; the idyls could become little epics, and we shall see the long epics written with all the minutiae of the idyls; the elegies were only in part lyric, and the dithyramb went out. The lyric expression was more than anything a vehicle for courtly praise, or a mere idle amusement, such as it became in the hands of Simmias, to whom belongs all the glory of inventing poems in the shape of various material objects, such as the axe. The Sotadic verses, as they were called after their inventor Sotades, were even less commendable.

The drama also faded into something quite as lifeless as the modern English play. Seven writers composed the inevitable Pleiad which flourished in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, 285-247 B.C.; these were Alexander of Ætolia, already mentioned as an elegiac poet, Sositheus, Philiseus, Homer the Younger, Acantides, Sosiphanes, and Lycophron of Chalcis. Yet again we must mourn the loss of nearly all their work; the few fragments that remain are not sufficient to authorize any reconstruction of their endeavors to imitate every form of literature. The testimony of the Romans, and the titles of the plays, do, however, make it clear that they made love their eternal subject, therein following the example set by Euripides. Possibly, too, some at least of their tragedies were composed rather for the delight of readers than for performance on the stage. Such a supposition finds a slight warrant in the only poem of Lycophron's that has been preserved. It is a long monologue placed in the mouth of Cassandra, foretelling the fall of Troy and the fate of all the principal contestants, as well as the subsequent events down to the time of the kings of Alexandria. It is well entitled the dark poem, for its learning, which is immense, is wrapped up in every device for securing obscurity; and while its literary merit is modest, it offers a rare treat to the grammarian and the historian. Its mythological lore shows the taste of the writer's age. The comedy probably followed the methods of Menander; had it not we should probably find traces of its influence in Roman literature; as it is, however, we must content ourselves with



the names of Machon, 250 B.C., and Aristonymus. The satyric drama appears to have been a vehicle for personal abuse.

Epic poetry found much favor at a time when it seemed as if every quality of the past could be renewed in a better condition by strenuous effort, and the seven names that we find in the list of Alexandrine writers of epics are Lycophron, Theocritus, Callimachus, Aratus, Apollonius of Rhodes, Nicander, and Homer of Byzantium. Long before this time a species of epic poetry had existed in Greece, part of it continuing the Homeric poems, the cyclic epics as they were called. These have already been mentioned. Another division had treated specially the legends about Heracles; at least Peisander, 640 B.C., and Panyasis, who lived in the fifth century B.C., chose him for their subject, but it was only in Alexandria that they found admirers. Antimachus, whose elegies have been mentioned, also wrote a long Thebaid, of which we are told that it was not until after the twenty-fourth book that the heroes arrived in Thebes and the action began. Certainly, whatever its qualities might have been, it was not Homeric.

### III.

We have seen the brief epic poems of Theocritus, but Apollonius Rhodius was not satisfied with such piecemeal performances. His epic was of considerable length, and ran through four books. Like many of his contemporaries, he was also famous for his learning and his knowledge of grammar as well as for his poetical achievements. He was at one time a pupil of Callimachus, but the two men quarreled, and Apollonius betook himself to Rhodes, whence the title Rhodian, and finally he returned to Alexandria, where he received the usual reward of literary merit by being given charge of the library. His poem, the *Argonautica*, is on the whole a favorable specimen of this glacial period of Greek literature. It must have satisfied all the demands of the critics of that time: the narration recounts the events in the order of their occurrence; Homer is conscientiously imitated, similes devised with ingenuity are inserted with the most laudable regularity; the myths are many, and doubtless correctly given; the geography is commendably accurate. Indeed, many occasional bits have a real charm of vividness and pathos, but the whole poem is a piece made to order by a learned, clever, and painstaking man, who tries to let attractive details serve instead of real emotion. He is overburdened by his responsibilities to the past. Yet later times by no means neglected him; Virgil read him and took hints for his *Æneid* from the *Argonautica* as well as from the *Iliad* and the *Odys-*



sey. Callimachus detested this work of his rival, whom he attacked with violence, and, to show how much better was a short epic, composed a *Hecate*, of which fragments remain. Yet although Apollonius has suffered for living on a dim border-ground between two antiquities, his work is better than his reputation; and although there is a tinge of weariness in the fidelity of some of the poem, it also contains passages full of real poetry. Undoubtedly the importance of the epic was very clear to Virgil, and this author's *Medea* was full of influence upon the later poet's *Dido*. The modernness which we find in the Carthaginian queen is a quality that Virgil found already existing in the *Medea* of Apollonius, especially in the passages that recount her love for Jason; and numerous correspondences attest the use he made of this original. Unfortunately the English version of this poem encases the tender story in a suit of formal cut, so that the little touches are as stiff and solemn as possible, and the intimate quality of this charming part of the story is wholly lost.

THE ARGONAUTS.



It is barely to be distinguished from the severity of Oppian or Nicander, mentioned below. Thus this passage, which is full of grace and marked by a light touch in the original, is lamentably petrified in the following version :

“Through the clear air unseen, relentless Love  
 Came like the fly, that mads the youthful drove.  
 Through valley, and through flood, it drives them wild,  
 Scourge of the herd, the Breeze by rustics styl'd.  
 Behind a column at the porch he stands,  
 And bends th' unerring bow with cruel hands.  
 A shaft untried he from the quiver drew,  
 Parent of pangs that bosom never knew.  
 With footsteps light the threshold then he passed,  
 And round and round his wily glances cast.  
 By Jason screen'd, he now contracts his size,  
 And to the nerve th' indented shaft applies.  
 He draws the feathered mischief to the head ;  
 Home to Medea's heart the shaft is sped.  
 Delirious trances all her powers subdue.  
 Back from the lofty dome that urchin flew,  
 A laugh malign his cruel mischief showed.  
 Deep in the virgin's breast his arrow glowed.  
 Like pent-up fires it raged ; and from that flame,  
 At Jason darted, ardent flashes came.  
 While soft oblivion o'er the spirit flows ;  
 With fainting throbs her bosom sunk and rose.  
 Sensations new the melting spirit filled ;  
 Through all her veins delightful anguish thrilled.  
 As when the toiling matron's frugal hand  
 Has heaped the fuel round the smothered brand ;  
 From works of wool her scanty means are drawn ;  
 Her wakeful toil anticipates the dawn,  
 And stores the hearth with lurking seeds of light,  
 That industry may steal an hour from night.  
 With gradual waste the fire in secret preys ;  
 The billet moulders as it feeds the blaze ;  
 Thus love, pernicious love, consum'd the maid,  
 A fire unseen that on the bosom prey'd  
 The various hue tumultuous passion speaks,  
 And pale and red alternate seize the cheeks.”

This pompous formality, which puts solemnities and trivialities in the same dress, may well leave the reader cold, but a more literal rendering of this last comparison will serve to show that the aridity is not the fault of the poet :

“As a poor working-woman, who lives on the hard toil of her hands, spreads dry twigs about a glowing ember in order to make a light in her room at night, and the fire starting up from the little spark consumes all the twigs at once ; so burned the fatal love in the young girl's heart ; her delicate cheeks grew red or pale in turns, in harmony with her thoughts.”

Elsewhere the arduous conflict in Medea's heart is told with a like grace. To be sure, the poem as a whole deserves no extravagant



praise, but though the flame of Greek poetry had nearly burned itself out, like the log in the working-woman's room, it occasionally flashed into new brief brilliancy over a few twigs and briars. Alexandria paid dearly for its position as the capital of the new civilization, but it has left a lasting mark on the literature of later times; and what inspired the Roman poets, and was, through them, the model on which a very large part of modern literature was built up, is now synonymous, in elegant objugation, with every form of literary vice and weakness. To call the present time Alexandrine is a favorite pastime of the pessimist.

Another worker in this field was Rhianus, who chose for his subject the fate of the Messenians, an actual historical event, therein imitating Chœrilus, who, fifty years after the battle of Salamis, composed an epic poem on the Persian Wars that had no success. Mythology had too firm a hold on Greek literature to be expelled by modern history. The poem of Rhianus bears witness to the incessant experiments of the Alexandrines.

Homer was not their only model, however; the antiquity of Hesiod, as well as his erudition, inspired other writers who doubtless felt the necessity of giving literary recognition to the new science that was growing up about them, and in one form or another demanding half of their attention. Thus it was that didactic poetry in epic form made its appearance, the most important examples that have survived being two poems of Aratus, of Soli, who flourished about 250 B.C. He, like all his fellow-bards, was a scholar as well as poet, and it was at the request of a Macedonian king that he composed his *Phænomena*, which was an abstract of astronomical science, and his *Signs of the Weather*. The scientific value of both would not do credit to a quack's almanac, yet there are a few passages that will please the student, even if they do not satisfy the astronomer. Such, for example, is that in which he warns his readers not to sail when the constellation of the Altar is visible:

"For by day you will scarcely make any progress, for the days are short; and in the night, overcome by terror, you will wait in vain for the dawn, which will not hasten to appear for all your cries. Then especially the assault of the winds is terrible. . . . Then the frost that comes from Zeus is fatal to the benumbed sailors."

And he closes the description of the sailor's woes by saying that only a thin plank separates them from Hades, a sentiment that has found expression in Virgil, Juvenal, and Victor Hugo. Although now he leaves us cold, Aratus was enormously admired in antiquity. He was quoted by St. Paul in his speech before the Areopagus



(Acts xvii. 28): "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring," a citation that gave Aratus a high place in the estimation of the early Fathers. The Romans also thought very highly of him; he was translated by Cicero and Germanicus, while Virgil, Ovid, and Manilius imitated some of his best lines; but now his fame is as dead as the science that inspired him.

## ARATUS.

## PROGNOSTICS OF WEATHER.

Be this the sign of wind; with rolling sweep  
 High swells the sea; long roarings echo deep  
 From billow-breaking rocks; shores murmur shrill,  
 Though calm from storm, and howls the topmost hill.  
 The heron with unsteady motion flies,  
 And shoreward hastes, with loud and piercing cries;  
 Borne o'er the deep, his flapping pinions sail,  
 While air is ruffled by the rising gale,  
 The coots, that wing through air serene their way,  
 'Gainst coming winds condense their close array.  
 The diving cormorants and wild-ducks stand,  
 And shake their dripping pinions on the sand:  
 And oft, a sudden cloud is seen to spread,  
 With length'ning shadow, o'er the mountain's head.

About a hundred years later, under Ptolemy V. or VI., Nicander of Colophon followed in the same path, and left two metrical efforts concerning the proper remedies against poison of beasts and drugs. Evidently we are near the end of the history of Greek poetry, when subjects like these could be chosen, for although in earlier times, in the lack of prose, some of the matters which were less adapted to metrical forms were necessarily written in poetry, we have here only an artificial attempt to revive the past in imitation of extinct models.

## NICANDER.

## THE SERPENT CERASTES.

Now may'st thou learn the subtle horned snake,  
 That steals upon thee, viperous in his make.  
 But, while the viper's forehead maim'd appears,  
 Horns, two or four, the bold Cerastes rears.  
 Lean, dun of hue, the snake in sands is laid,  
 Or haunts within the trench that wheels have made.  
 Against thee straight on onward spires he rides,  
 And, with long path, on trailing belly glides:  
 But, sidelong-tottering, rolls his middle track,  
 And wins his crooked way, and twines his scaly back:  
 As, with long stern, some galley cleaves the tide,  
 Wavering with gusts, and dips its diving side;  
 While, as the vessel cuts its channel'd way,  
 Dash'd on the wind recoils the scatter'd spray.

When bites the serpent, straight the puncture round  
 A callous tumour, like a nail, is found :  
 And livid pustules, large as drops of rain,  
 Spread round the bite ; of dull, and faintish stain ;  
 Feeble the smart ; but, when nine suns have shone,  
 The agonizing symptoms hasten on.

The decadence was not confined to the contemporaries of Nicander ; in the reign of the early Ptolemy, Rhinthon of Tarentum had imported from his home the burlesque tragedies which treated the old myths of the great tragedians in the fashion of comedies, and he found many to follow him. Timon of Phlius, about 270 B.C., distinguished himself by his Silli, or satiric poems, wherewith he attacked the philosophy of Pyrrho. He also wrote epics and tragedies. In the main the chronicle of the later days is scarcely more than a list of proper names. Euphoriion of Chalcis, about 230 B.C., was a busy writer who left behind him a reputation for obscurity, which, however, won for him the attention of the Romans. Later we hear of Archias of Antioch, Cicero's teacher, the poet of the Cimbrian and Macedonian wars ; Scymnus of Chios, who wrote a geography in iambics ; Agathyllus, Butas and Parthenius, a teacher of Virgil. It was through these men that the Alexandrine literature made its way into Rome. Babrias, the fabulist, is supposed to belong to this period just before the Christian era. After that date we find Marcellus conveying medical instruction in a poem of forty-two books, all of which are lost. Fate has been kinder to the two poems ascribed to Oppianus, one on fish and fishing and the other on the chase. Whether he was one or two persons is a question not decided, and for us unimportant. The poems—more than five thousand hexameter lines in all, present a curious medley of inaccurate science and fantastic statement, adorned with all the rhetorical devices that echo what had once been real poetry. By another accident a poetical geography of Dionysius Periegetes, in nearly twelve hundred hexameters, has come down to us. Yet these last sad gasps are serious and dignified by the side of the work of Nestor, who about 200 A.D. wrote an *Iliad*, omitting *A* in the first book, *B* in the second, and so on through the desecrated alphabet.

#### IV.

Yet the Greek literature, though near its death, was not destined to end, like a children's magazine, with puzzles and verbal tricks. Poetry was silent for a long time, and it seemed as if its painful gasping was wholly over, but in the fifth century of our era it showed again faint signs of life, and an attempt was made to galvanize the long-neglected measures and subjects. Nonnus of Pannopolis wrote a long epic, the

Dionysiaca, or Deeds of Dionysus, in forty-eight books, which vie with one another in extravagance and incoherence, reminding one of the long epics of the Renaissance. It is not Dionysus alone that he sings; the rape of Europa, the contest between Typhonus and Zeus, the story of Cadmus and the foundation of Thebes, and many other myths occupy the first six books, and not until the ninth is Dionysus born.

What is curious in this epic is the extent to which all the tendencies of the later poetry are developed, the energy with which myths are accumulated and incidents are combined together, the unceasing descriptions of one scene after another, all illustrate the common quality of what may be called artificial literature, in which ornamentation becomes the sole end of the composer. The whole poem is a huge mass of rococo work; it glistens with every refinement that ingenuity could suggest, and all the ammunition of modern poets who have made use of mythological allusions seems stolen from this vast storehouse of rhetoric. The lines translated below will illustrate this artificiality, which simply exaggerates the widespread taste of the time. In its intensity, and in the curious bits of learning that adorn its pages, we may also find the poetical equivalent of the rhetorical prose that adorned the romances to be spoken of later.

The following is a fair representative of the general tone of the poem. The nature of the incident is sufficiently characteristic, and the treatment will at once be recognized as that which has become familiar to readers of modern verse.

A restless lover, we are told, was one day wandering among the broad-browed herds, when he saw approaching a proud, shy girl, led thither by the chase, and he at once began this song with a longing voice:

“Ah! would I might her quiver be!  
 Her cord, or quivering spear!  
 Her murderous javelin! If but she  
 Me in her hands might rear!  
 Or might I rather be the string  
 She stretches for her bow!  
 That, drawing it, she might it bring  
 Against those breasts of snow,  
 That 'scape her maiden vest;  
 Yes, heifer! Yes, bull!  
 That 'scape her maiden vest.

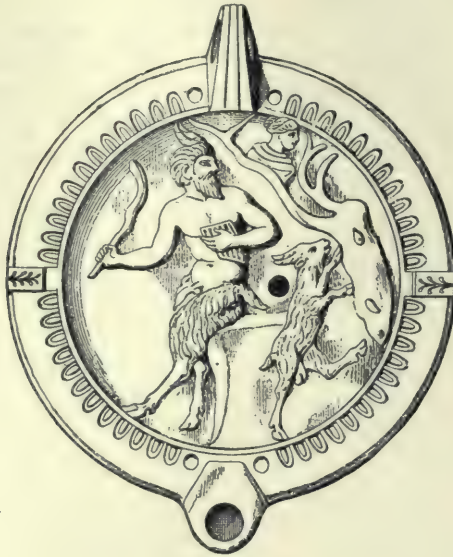
May the gods grant me this great boon,  
 That, heated from the chase,  
 The proud young girl may come at noon  
 To this retiring place,  
 And in this fount's caressing waves  
 Her beauties all set free  
 May find the coolness that she craves



And I be there to see.  
 Yes, heifer! Yes, bull!  
 Her beauties all set free.

Ah! happier and more favored are  
 Your arrows, Virgin, than your slave,  
 The Shepherd Hymnos from afar  
 Envies them what he may not have,  
 Your touch, which is the birth of love,  
 Your arrows, quiver, and your spear,  
 You value him so far above  
 He would be they, and thus be dear  
 To you, and no more envy prove."

But the nymph only scoffs at his impassioned wooing, and taunts him thus:



PAN AND ECHO.

"Oh! Truly it beseems you, Pan, to play  
 The tunes of Cytherea! Did Pan woo  
 Echo more skilfully than me you do?  
 When Daphnis sang, who hearkened to his lay?  
 His songs and pastorals but put to flight  
 The nymph who hid herself in caves of night,  
 And oft as Phœbus wooed, said Daphne nay!"

Then she threatens the swain with her lance, and he says:

"Ah well! I beg thee use thy cherished lance,  
 To thy white hand I'd fall the sacrifice,  
 And find therein, O cruel one! my joy;  
 Nor do I seek to shun thy blade or spear,

Nor the most instant death, since thus I might  
 Escape th' unceasing pangs of hopeless love,  
 That soul-devouring flame! Let then thy spear  
 Fly at my head, and strike no more my heart.  
 And yet — why should I need another wound? —  
 But stab me if thou wilt once more, once more;  
 Let the earth cover me victim to thee  
 And all-consuming love! Death would be sweet  
 If thou would'st end what Cypris has begun.  
 Then spare my head; thy arrows shall seek hers  
 And find before them deep within my heart  
 The fatal dart of love," etc., etc.

After more pleading of this sort, the cold-hearted nymph takes him at his word and shoots her arrow straight into his neck, and thus cuts short his never-ending plaints. The poet then goes on to tell us that this cruel death fills with indignation all the mountain nymphs; indeed universal nature did lament; when he saw how hard-hearted the girl was, Eros cast away his bow; Rhea, who never wept, and Echo, lamented his untimely end; even the oak-trees remonstrated. His bull and his heifer also wept in sympathy and gave utterance to the following wail:

" Our shepherd is slain,  
 The beautiful youth  
 We shall ne'er see again!  
 By a nymph without ruth  
 He was slain! he was slain!

He loved a young girl,  
 For her he drew breath,  
 He gave her his love,  
 She gave him his death.

In his very heart's blood  
 She has moistened her dart;  
 With his heart's blood extinguished  
 Love's flame in his heart.

Our shepherd is slain!  
 The beautiful youth  
 We shall ne'er see again!  
 By a nymph without ruth  
 He was slain! he was slain!

Rock, willow, and larch  
 For his life did implore;  
 And the nymphs are all weeping  
 Since he is no more.

O, kill not our shepherd!  
 E'en the wolves and the bears  
 Implored her to pity,  
 Fierce lions shed tears.



ARTEMIS.  
(Goddess of the Chase.)



Our shepherd is slain !  
 The beautiful youth  
 We shall ne'er see again.  
 By a nymph without ruth  
 He was slain ! he was slain !

Farewell to the nymphs  
 Of the forests and mountains !  
 Farewell to our pastures  
 And cool, sparkling fountains !

Pan the shepherd, and Phœbus  
 Cry, Perish the flute !  
 Is Nemesis sleeping ?  
 Is Cypris still mute ?

O, Eros, thy quiver  
 Lay by, we implore !  
 And reed pipes be silent !  
 His tunes sound no more."

As a final touch we are told that Apollo showed the cruel murder to Artemis, and even she, inexperienced in love as she was, wept for Hymnos and his unrequited affection.

What Nonnus did on a great scale was attempted in miniature by Tryphiodorus, of uncertain date, who wrote a Sacking of Troy in less than seven hundred lines. Coluthus has left a Rape of Helen, containing a little under four hundred lines, devoid of real interest, like a sort of rhetorical exercise. Far more famous is the poem of Musæus the grammarian, the Hero and Leander, which is remarkably free from the infection of the surrounding bombast and extravagance. The story of the love of Leander and Hero, of Leander's swimming the Hellespont to visit his mistress, and of his final death by drowning, had been already referred to by Virgil and Ovid as well as by other late Greek and Roman poets ; so that it is by no means impossible that there was in existence an earlier Alexandrine original which Musæus made over into its present form. However that may be, he has left us a most charming poem, containing beautiful pictures of love, recounted with a grace that reminds the reader of good Greek work, so simple is it, so devoid of the marks of a decaying literature. No work of the Alexandrines has had greater direct influence upon modern literature, yet it made its way into it by false pretences, this later Musæus being mistaken for the earlier poet of the same name, a semi-mythological personage of a very remote past. Until it was clearly known that this poem was a late production, it was imagined that even earlier than the Iliad and Odyssey had been sung the love of Hero and Leander, and that all these graces of a ripe civilization belonged to the very infancy of poetry. J. C. Scaliger, for instance,

after expressing the utmost admiration for the grace and elegance of Musæus, asserted that if that poet had written the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* he would have done far better than Homer. Manutius, when attempting to reprint the whole of Greek literature, began with the *Hero and Leander*, being "desirous that Musæus, the most ancient poet, should form a prelude to Aristotle and the other sages." The subject and the artistic treatment gave the poem an especial charm to men who were accustomed to find love their most inspiring subject, and who saw beneath the abundant conceits and elegances a genuine simplicity. Hence Clément Marot put it into French; Boscan into Spanish; and Chapman into English, after completing Marlowe's unfinished reproduction of the poem. Thus we see the



PAN AND APOLLO.

beginning of modern literature joining hands with the end of that of the ancients; the kinship was strong, and had been maintained through the work of the Latin writers, whose full indebtedness to the Alexandrines can never be exactly known.

## V.

Another poet of some importance was Kointos Smurnaïos, or Quintus Smyrnæus, as he is commonly called, who wrote an epic poem in fourteen books recounting what occurred between the death of Hector

and the return of the Achæans. It thus fills the gap between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but Quintus is rather a faithful student of Homer than a real Homer, although, on the other hand, he eschews the blemishes that one might expect to find in a possible contemporary of Nonnus. Indeed, one is struck by his clearness and correctness, and his happy avoidance of the exaggerations and absurdities of the later school. The poem is interesting, too, as a contribution to our knowledge of the old myths, for there is but little doubt that the author availed himself freely of the rich stores amassed by the Cyclic poets, and by the busy Alexandrine investigators.

The natural tendency would be either entirely to overlook this presumptuous epic, that pretends to fill the gap between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, as if it were a mere hyphen, or else perversely to exaggerate its merits; but, examined fairly, it will be found to have certain admirable qualities. One would certainly expect to find, for example, rather metaphors and similes taken from books than from observation, yet one of the most vivid and attractive traits of this poet is the fresh and lifelike nature of these images. Thus, he compares Penthesilea's pursuit of the retreating Greeks to the wave that follows a ship running before the wind, as only a man who had seen it would do:

"And the Greeks fled, overwhelmed with terror, but she followed them, as the wave of the sounding sea follows the swift vessels when the eager wind fills their white sails, and the shores everywhere echo beneath the blows of the surf dashing the foam along the shore."

At times, indeed, his comparisons run to the opposite quality in their freedom from conventional shackles, as when Ajax, in his delirium on being refused the weapons of Achilles, is thus described:

"His heart was boiling within him, as boils a copper vessel before the flame of Hephaistos; the water splutters and hisses over the fire, while the wood that a slave has gathered burns around it, and he is busy removing the bristles from the long-fattened pig."

A devotee of literature would scorn ignoble pigs here, and again, when the Greeks have made their way into Troy, and the inhabitants are put to death—

"like fat swine in the palace of a rich king who wishes to prepare a sumptuous repast for his people."

Certainly an excessive devotion to literary refinements is not to be noticed here. An equal simplicity may be observed in a comparison that brings into relief the energy of Penthesilea:





FIGHT WITH THE AMAZONS.  
(Mausoleum Relief.)

"She slew now one ; now, another. As when a young heifer rushing into a garden dripping with dew, desirous of the new spring herbage, escaped from her master, plunges here and there, destroying all the plants that have begun to sprout ; she eats some and tramples the others beneath her hoofs, so, rushing among the Greeks, the warlike maiden put some to death and turned the others to flight."

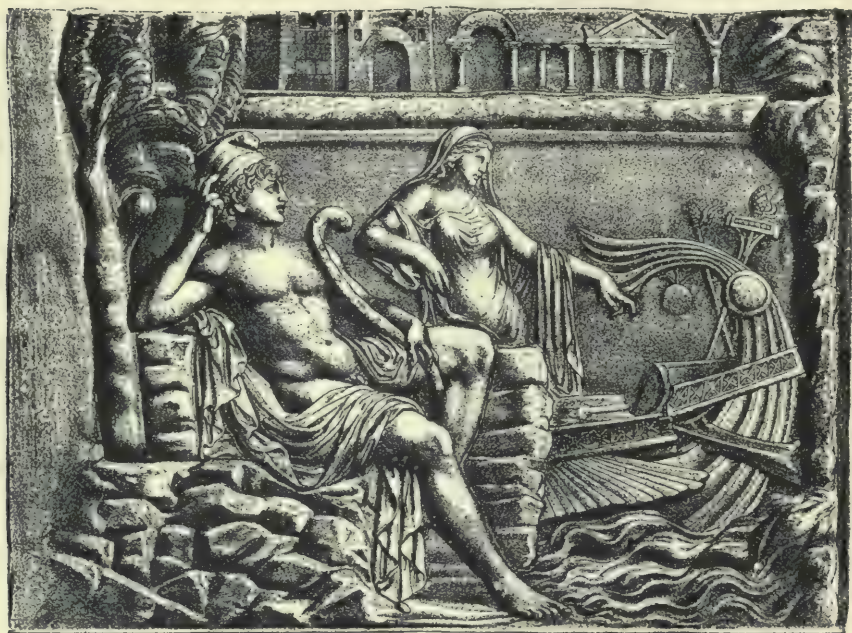
Nor are these the only instances of the movement and energy of Quintus, that are certainly manifest even if the traditions of literature, or rather its etiquette, be at times offended. The speeches of the various characters are often eloquent ; the personages are clearly distinguished, and often a scene is brought distinctly before the imagination of the reader. Moreover, it must be remembered that the test which is applied to the work of this little known poet is the hardest in the world, for we are compelled to compare him with Homer and Virgil, and even this rigorous test he endures fairly well. This extract from the tenth book is perhaps as good an example as any of his excellence. It describes the grief of C  none at the death of her husband, Paris, who had deserted her for Helen. When wounded, he had made his way to his early love, but she had driven him away violently ; but now she has heard of his death, and—

"Alone, remote, C  none, broken-hearted, shunning the company of other women, was extended on the earth, weeping and bemoaning the love of her husband. Often the snow scattered by the north winds covers the side of the mountains and the depths of the valleys ; then the huge mass gradually melts, in a pure stream, and while a thick layer covers the trees of the forest, an icy brook is yet visible, so C  none was melting beneath the weight of her grief, thinking of the man she had loved ; and groaning deeply, she reproached herself thus : 'O foolish woman ! O, life of agony ! O, the futile love which I devoted to my husband ! Alas ! I had hoped to reach old age with him, and with him to die, after a happy union. The gods have decided differently ! Would to heaven that the cruel Fates had ended my life when Paris deserted me. But though he scorned me, I will die near him, for the light of day has no more sweetness for me.'"

"And while she uttered these words, great tears flowed from her eyes, in memory of her husband who had died ; she was wasting away, like wax before the fire ; yet out of consideration for her father and attendant hand-maidens, she uttered no word until night had spread from the shores of the ocean over the whole world, bringing to mortals forgetfulness of their woes. Then, when her father and her attendants were sleeping, she opened the house-door and came forth, like a tempest, and her light feet supported her. . . . Her legs did not weary under her, her feet with ever-fresh agility carried her along ; she ran, supported by Death and Love. She ran without a thought of the wild beasts that haunt the night, that formerly filled her with terror ; without a pang she climbed the rocks on the mountains, she crossed precipices, and threaded her way through ravines. The Moon, who saw her from the sky, remembering her love for fair Endymion, took pity on her sor-



row and lit the long path she had to follow. At last she made her way across the mountain to the spot where the nymphs were weeping around the body of Alexander [Paris]. Already the impetuous flames of the funeral fire surrounded it ; the shepherds from all quarters had gathered a vast quantity of trees to pay the last honours to their comrade and their prince ; and they were bitterly weeping. When she saw the body, she did not weep, although her grief was great, but hiding her fair face beneath her veil, she flung herself upon the pile, and amid the cries of the shepherds was consumed in company with her husband. The nymphs were seized with amazement at seeing her seek her death near him, and said : " Certainly Paris was foolish to abandon his wife and to love a miserable woman who brought ruin to him and to the Trojans ! Unhappy one ! he took no thought of his



PARIS AND CENONE.

noble wife who loved him more than the light of day, despite the contempt and hatred he felt for her ! " So spake the nymphs ; and the pair were consumed on the pile, forgetful of the approaching dawn."

Certainly even in this ill-fitting garb the energy and simplicity of the original still survive ; and it is possible to see how the subject found even at a late date a man not wholly incapable of representing its beauty. Quintus had some qualities that distinguished him from the rest of what Shelley called the poets of his time—"a flock of mockbirds." His song was not very sweet, but it was also not purely mechanical.



We need scarcely mourn the loss of the epics by those late bards who sang of recent historical events after the manner of Homer, such as Eusebius, who commemorated the war of the Romans with the Goths, and we may be resigned to the disappearance of the didactic poem in which Timotheus of Gaza gave instruction in natural history. These faint echoes, however, are not the only ones. Writers of occasional verse and of epigrams still survived, whose names even scarcely demand copying. About this time belong the poems inaccurately ascribed to Orpheus; possibly some traces of the traditional relics of the past are to be found here, but these are but meager. The Expedition of the Argonauts is certainly of late origin; the hymns are of a mystical and religious nature, and the poems on the qualities of stones read like early studies for the poetry of the middle ages. The hymns of Proclus are very similar to those ascribed to Orpheus.

Later, in the Byzantine period, between Justinian and the capture of Constantinople in 1453 A.D., poetry languished with the extreme depression of public spirit. Christianity silenced even the memory of the old sources of inspiration; the old metres were forgotten and even succeeded by rhyme. In the fourth century Gregory of Nazianzus wrote original verse, and to him is often ascribed the credit of putting together a tragedy on the sufferings of Christ out of lines culled mainly from Euripides. It seems much more likely, however, that this was done by some one else. The epigram remained popular even when everything else had vanished; the most eminent names in the sixth century being those of Paulus Silentiarius, who also wrote a metrical description of the church of St. Sophia and Agathias. Last of all we find the name of Joannes Tzetzes in the twelfth century, whose *Iliaca* repeats the myths about the Trojan war in three poems of nearly seventeen hundred lines in all. Another poem of between twelve and thirteen thousand lines is a mere *congeries* of myths and historical facts, strung together without judgment and written in the political verse, as it was called, wherein accent took the place of the former prosody.

## VI.

Such is the dreary record of the decay of Greek poetry, from which it is pleasant to turn to the consideration of the most important monument of that literature that has come down to us, namely, the Anthology. We have already seen how short-breathed most of the later writers became, how in their hands the epic shrank into something that was often of no greater magnitude than a long letter, and the last to perish of all the poetical forms was that of the brief epigram. That survived when longer effort was impossible, just as a

man may utter a witticism on his death-bed when he has strength for nothing else. As has been said above, the change in the fine arts corresponded to that in the arts, and the change from the production of works of sculpture to that of painting, and through that to work on gems, corresponded to the disintegrating evolution of literature to works of the smallest and most graceful kind. When the period of active production had disappeared, men began to collect memorials of the past, and in the second century before Christ this general interest in antiquity asserted itself in various ways. Inscriptions began to be copied and recorded, partly from antiquarian and partly from literary curiosity. The first to arrange these in order seems to have been Meleager, about 60 B.C., who, besides writing many charming epigrams, conceived the happy notion of collecting those of others in what he called a wreath, made of the flowers of Greek poetry. About one hundred years after Christ, Philip of Thessalonica prepared another collection to include what had been written since the days of Meleager, including much of his own work. Both of these anthologies, however, have been lost. The third editor was Agathias, in the second half of the sixth century, a man also well known as a jurist and a historian. Four centuries later Constantine Cephalas made another selection from what was left of the material amassed by his predecessors, probably omitting much that would be welcome now, to make place for later work, and this collection now forms our present anthology, or collection of flowers. Its vicissitudes did not end with the beginning of modern times. In the fourteenth century the monk Maximus Planudes felt it incumbent upon him to revise the work of Cephalas, to expurgate it by omission and correction, and this version was for a long time the only one known to modern readers. Fortunately one manuscript of the anthology of Cephalas had been preserved in the Palatine library at Heidelberg, where it was discovered by Saumaise—better known as Milton's antagonist, Salmasius—in 1606 A.D. It was long, however, before this collection saw the day. Saumaise could not get it published without a Latin translation, for the early interest in Greek had begun to wane, and he died before he could complete this task. Meanwhile the manuscript had been carried to the Vatican after the sack of Heidelberg in 1623 A.D. Thither Isaac Voss had sent a man to make a copy of the manuscript in order to anticipate his rival, but the death of Saumaise removed the necessity for this ingenious annoyance, and for a long time nothing was done about it. In 1797 A.D., after being once copied twenty years earlier by the Abbé Spalletti, the manuscript was carried to Paris, whence it was restored to Heidelberg in 1815 A.D. It was, however, between 1772 and 1817 A.D., that the full text was published.





The collection is most rich and valuable, and we may trace the growth of the epigram from the beginning of the Persian war until it expired in riddles and conceits with the decay of the Greek influence six centuries after Christ. We find in it—to mention them in their order—Christian epigrams from the monuments and statues dedicated to religion in Byzantium; an account, written in hexameters, of the statues that stood in the gymnasium of that city; the mural inscriptions from the temple of Apollonis in Cyzicus; the prefaces of Meleager, Philip, and Agathias to their anthologies; a number of erotic epigrams; a collection of inscriptions composed in honor of illustrious deeds or to explain various votive offerings; epitaphs; a dull collection of the poems of Saint Gregory the Theologian; a number of miscellaneous epigrams form the next section, which is followed by another series that sing the brevity of life and the vanity of all things; then come satirical epigrams; a number composed by Straton that have to do with the perversion of love that was common among the Greeks, with others that are ascribed to Straton; then a few in various irregular metres; following these are riddles and oracles; then a few miscellaneous ones; and finally some included by Planudes that are not to be found in the collection of Cephalas.

Obviously no one word can be found that shall define such a variety of poems of such different dates. Their uniform aim, graceful concision, is but a vague description of the quality that marks the best and is sought for in the worst, and was as much a condition of the epigram as are fourteen lines for the sonnet. Indeed, the modern sonnet is perhaps the best equivalent of the ancient epigram, so far as it is a common conventional form, current everywhere, as the recognized desire for the expression of almost every emotion. Yet brief as the sonnet is, it has been known to be at times too long for the message it had to convey; and in its inflexibility there survives the trace of the Middle Ages which stand like a gulf between Greece and us. The Hellenic poets not only knew the privilege and necessity of brevity, they possessed the rarer power of stopping when they had said what they had to say.

While the first place among the writers of the Anthology belongs to Meleager, for both the abundance and the rare charm of his epigrams, there are many others, known to us only by a few poems here preserved, who well deserve their modest share of immortality. Yet the main impression that is left on the reader is by no means a personal one. The reader may learn to recognize the exquisite grace of Meleager, or the touch of some of his rivals; but the most important thing about the collection is the vast amount of light that it throws on the Greek view of life, with all its directness, frankness, and gra-



ciousness. Its charm is in great measure artistic simplicity of expression, such as may be noticed elsewhere in the more ambitious work of Grecian literature. While there is possibly a certain monotony in the form of utterance, with its chastened directness that is yet compact of suggestiveness, the subjects cover every matter of interest for the cultivated people by and for whom these epigrams were written. Of vast questions there is no trace, partly because of the unsuitability of the epigram for the discussion of such matters, and partly, doubtless, because of the general indifference of the later Hellenistic time for anything but the commonplaces of life and society. These are treated with unwearying assiduity, and naturally with varying success, yet the general standard is high, and the quality of literary execution noticeably uniform. Even though there are many that fall short of the desired success, the aim is always manifest in the effort to attain a compact statement that shall yet be full of forcible suggestion, that shall, as painters say, "carry" well, with all the vivid brilliancy of the gems which they resemble in their capacity for enduring workmanship without betraying it.

What in modern poetry is most like them is the sonnet, as has been said above, and, like the sonnet, they refuse admittance to more than a single thought, which must be stated with absolute limpidity and graceful art. What the thought should be that was to be expressed was almost a matter of indifference. Some of them are full of dignity, others again are not; they are frank statements that would not find their way into modern literature, which inclines to hold itself just outside of life in very much the same way that literary style differs from that of talk. And it is not meant merely that many of the erotic poems are unquotable,—even the grossest of these lack the earthy quality of many of the Latin ones that were carefully done by the Neo-Latin poets and so made their way into modern literature,—but there is to be noticed the absence of any question whether such or such a thing needs to be written about. The author wrote it, and if he wrote it well he was satisfied. It is to be remembered, of course, that he did not have in mind any intention of composing pieces for an anthology; he simply turned off a little poem for an inscription, to accompany a gift, or merely to be shown to one person and another. This unconsciousness of a great aim was then in part the result of circumstances, and it has secured for us an admirable vision of the current life and interests of a long period. We everywhere notice the brevity which is not curtness, but chastened speech that is most gracious or most eloquent. And this quality, which is attained without perceptible effort, is one most characteristic of the Greeks, as sonority is of the Romans, or as joy in imitation

of the classics in much of modern literature of not so many years ago.

Certainly this reticence must have brought with it a delight that outweighs even that of the sound of one's own voice. What words, for instance, could add anything to this inscription?

"No, I am not the tomb of Themistocles; I am a Magnesian monument that bears witness to the jealousy and iniquity of the Greeks."

It tells the fate of that great man, dying in exile, as no full description could do. Here is another bit of silence:

"The aged Nico lays wreaths on the tomb of the young Melita. Pluto, is that justice?"

When one recalls the definition of an epigram, thus translated by Mr. Symonds:

"Two lines complete the epigram—or three.  
Write more; you aim at epic poetry,"

it is easy to see how superior it is in its simplicity to the modern epigram with the pertness of its sting, which is often only to be determined by italics and such typographical aid. These Greek poems bear a much stronger likeness to short Japanese poems and those of the Persian writers, of whom the best known is Omar Khayyam. Thus, of these two poems it would not be easy to say which was written in Persian and which in Greek. One is:

"I have often sung it, and from the bottom of the tomb I shall call forth,  
'Drink, before you turn to dust like me.'"

The other:

"The day when I shall be a stranger to myself, and when my name shall be as a tale that is told, then make of my clay a wine-jar for use in the tavern."

And it is not merely in these convivial appeals that the resemblance is to be noticed. These from the Japanese:

"I did not wish to hear about the troubles of life, and so I fled far away to the distant hills, but even there I heard the painful cry of the wounded deer,"

and,

"When I am sad, my feelings are like the closing year, and looking at the autumnal moon only increases my sorrow,"

have the same delicate reticence, the single touch, that characterizes not merely the best Greek work, but even that of the latest.

The fullness of the collection throws much light on historical events, yet more interesting, one may say, are the many glimpses we get of the private life of the Greeks. These are to be found especially in the votive inscriptions, although not in these alone, for continually we find traces of their thoughts and feelings as the stamp of what might be called their poetical wit. Of many again it is true that short as they are, they too often justify Rivarol's criticism of a couplet that was offered to his examination: "It's very good, but it's long-winded in places."

## VII.

### EXTRACTS FROM THE ANTHOLOGY.

#### MELEAGER.

Gentle Asclepias, with her eyes of blue,  
Reflects the azure calm of heaven above;  
With her soft glances she is tempting you  
All to embark on the deep sea of love.  
(Anth. Pal. V. 156.)

#### MELEAGER.

On Heliodora's head the loveliest wreath  
Pales by the beauties that are seen beneath.  
(V. 143.)

#### CRINAGORAS.

What shall I call you first? Unhappy one!  
What next should you be called? Unhappy one!  
For you have suffered but no wrong have done.  
O charming woman, who are now no more!  
Your face showed forth a perfect loveliness  
And all with perfect love your heart did bless,  
And Proté\* rightly was the name you bore;  
For sure such grace was never known before.  
(V. 108.)

#### MELEAGER.

The cup laughs with joy to be touched while she sips  
By the eloquent mouth of the fair Zenophil.  
Ah, happy the cup! How I long for those lips  
That my whole heart and soul in a breath they may steal.  
(V. 171.)

\* The first.



## PAUL THE SILENTIARY.

No crown the rosebud needs, and thou,  
 Thou need'st no 'broidered veils or gems to wear;  
 Gold adds no brightness to thy flowing hair,  
 Pearls are less white than are thy neck and brow.  
 From purple depths of th' Indian hyacinth gleams  
 A sparkling fire, but thine eyes shine more bright  
 Of thy soft eyes are stars that shine more bright.  
 Thy fresh lips and thy graceful form that seems  
 A goddess's, could not have greater might  
 If Cytherea's girdle thou shouldst wear.  
 To approach such loveliness I should not dare,  
 Did not thy gentle eyes my heart invite  
 The sweet hope that I read in thee to share!  
 (V. 270.)

## PAUL THE SILENTIARY.

My lips delay to say to thee, Farewell!  
 And by thy side I linger silently.  
 Must I then go? Such parting were to me  
 More dreadful than the darkest gloom of hell,  
 For thou art as my very light of day;  
 But day is silent, and thy gentle voice  
 More than a syren's song makes me rejoice,  
 And round thy lips my dearest wishes play.  
 (V. 241.)

## ANONYMOUS.

Does the rose crown Dionysius,  
 Or Dionysius crown the rose?  
 Ah yes! The wearer crowns the crown,  
 For that less beauty shows.  
 (V. 142.)

## MELEAGER.

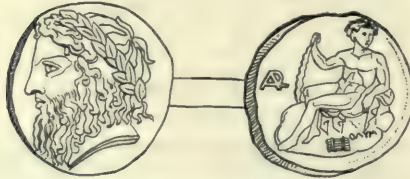
Heliodora! Love hath fashioned thee  
 From out my very heart.  
 Heliodora! sweet-voiced! unto me  
 As my soul's soul thou art!  
 (V. 155.)

## MELEAGER.

By the god Pan of Arcady I vow,  
 Sweet is thy singing, Zenophil, and thou

Sweetly canst play the lyre. Where can I flee  
 To escape thy loving charms besieging me?  
 Not for a moment will they let me rest.  
 Now 'tis thy slender form in beauty drest,  
 There 'tis thy voice, thy grace, what do I say  
 It is *thyself* for whom I burn away.

(V. 139.)



PAN OF ARCADY.

### PAUL THE SILENTIARY.

How sweet the smiles of Lais! and how sweet  
 Tears from her charming eyes!  
 But yesterday she leaned on me and wept  
 Without a cause, and moaned.  
 I kissed her, but her tears still fell like rain.  
 "Why weepest thou?" I prayed.  
 "I feared lest thou shouldst leave me," murmured she,  
 "For men are never true."  
 (V. 250.)

### BY LEONIDAS OR ANTIPATES.

#### EPITAPH ON TIMON THE MISANTHROPE.

Utter no words, but pass me by  
 In silence; nor ask who I be;  
 Nor seek to know whose son was I.  
 E'en silently approach not me.  
 Go far around and come not nigh!  
 (VII. 316.)

### PHILODEMUS.

Heliodora must thou shun  
 Ere love for her is in thee begun!  
 Thus warned my soul for she knows well  
 Love's pangs and tortures to foretell.

Such were her words, but how can I,  
 If love pursue, have strength to fly?  
 For she who boldly love reproves,  
 Already Heliodora loves.  
 (V. 24.)

## PLATO.

I, the proud Lais, to whose door once came  
 Troops of young lovers, and whose toy was Greece,  
 I consecrate to Cytherea now  
 My mirror, since I can no longer see  
 Myself reflected there as once I was,  
 And would not see, alas ! as now I am.  
 (VI. 1.)

## MOCRUS OF BYZANTIUM.

Nymphs, hamadryads, daughters of the river,  
 Who ceaseless tread, with rosy feet, the valleys,  
 Cherish Cleonymus who consecrated  
 To you, beneath the pines, these beauteous statues !  
 (VI. 189.)

## CRINAGORAS.

Roses of old oped with the opening year,  
 But we our crimson chalices throw wide  
 In winter, greeting thus thy birthday, near  
 To that blest day when thou shalt be a bride.  
 If us upon thy head thou deign to wear,  
 O loveliest woman, then to be espied  
 Were than the sun of spring to us more dear.  
 (VI. 345.)

## ASCLEPIADES.

O wreaths ! remain here hanging on this door,  
 Nor hasty shake your leaves,  
 Your leaves that I have drenchèd with my tears,  
 Such tears as lovers shed.  
 But when you see the door softly unclose,  
 Let fall your bitter dew  
 Upon her head, that her light golden hair  
 May thus drink in my tears !  
 (V. 145.)

## LEONIDAS.

One, crystal, and one silver brings,  
 One, topazes of cost,  
 For thy birthday fit offerings  
 Their jewels rich they boast.

But, Agrippina, take from me  
 Two verses that I write.  
 A humble gift I give to thee  
 That envy cannot spite.  
 (VI. 329.)



## ANTIPATES.\*

Not of Themistocles am I the tomb.  
 No! A Magnesian monument I am  
 To the ungrateful rancour of the Greeks.  
 (VII. 236.)

## MELEAGER.†

That butterfly, my soul, if thou, Love, burn  
 Too often with thy flame, O cruel one,  
 Itself has wings to fly and ne'er return.  
 (V. 57.)

## ERYEIUS.

No more upon thy flute, Therimachus,  
 Beside the lofty plane, thy shepherd's song  
 Thou'lt tune! Thy hornèd herds will hear no more  
 Sweet reedy melodies, while 'neath the shade  
 Of the broad oak thou liest. For thou art gone!  
 Slain by the deadly whirlwind's thunderblast,  
 And homeward late the hurrying cows return,  
 Harassed upon their path by driving sleet.  
 (VII. 134.)

## SIMMIAS OF THEBES.

Quietly o'er the tomb of Sophocles,  
 Quietly, ivy, creep with tendrils green;  
 And, roses, ope your petals everywhere,  
 While dewy shoots of grapevine peep between,  
 Upon the wise and honeyed poet's grave,  
 Whom muse and grace their richest treasures gave.  
 (VII. 22.)

## THUCYDIDES.

## ON EURIPIDES.

The great Euripides has for his tomb  
 All Hellas, though the Macedonian earth  
 Contains his ashes, since death found him there.  
 Hellas of Hellas, Athens, was his home;  
 Hence came the verses which have charmed all hearts,  
 And have won every mouth to sing his praise.  
 (VII. 45.)

## LEONIDAS OR MELEAGER.

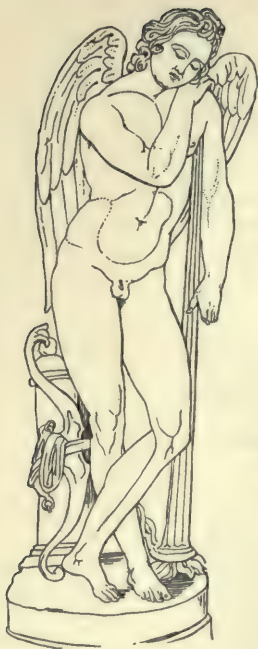
## ON ERINNA.‡

The maiden! The young singer! Like a bee  
 Stealing thy sweets the muses' flowers among.  
 Erinna! All too truly hast thou sung  
 "Thou art a jealous god, O Death!" Didst thou foresee  
 How soon thou wert the bride of Death to be?  
 (VII. 13.)

\* Themistocles died at Magnesia in exile.

† There is here a play on the word *ψυχῇ*.

‡ One of Erinna's poems began with the words: "I am in love with Death."



HYMEN.

## MELEAGER.

At the bride's gate the lotus flutes were sounding  
 All yesterday, doors swinging to and fro ;  
 This morn for Clearista all are weeping,  
 Their song of Hymen changed to dirge of woe.  
 Her bridegroom, Death ; she'll have no other wedding,  
 For him she hath unclasped her virgin zone.  
 The very torches for her bridal burning  
 Shall light her trembling feet to Acheron.  
 (VII. 182.)

## MELEAGER.

Ah, bee ! why iouchest thou Heliodora's cheek ?  
 Feaster on flowers, why leav'st the cups of spring ?  
 Wouldst have me know that she too feels of love  
 The sweet, the unendurable, the bitter sting ?  
 Thus say'st thou, loved of lovers ? Then begone !  
 Depart ! for long thy message have we known.  
 (V. 163.)

## DIOSCORIDES.

Eight sons sent Demeete forth to fight  
 Against her country's foes ; and on one bier  
 And in one grave the mother laid all eight.  
 Then of her loss she said without a tear,  
 " I bore them, Sparta, but thy sons they were !"  
 (VII. 4, 34.)

## CHÆREMON.

Eubulos, son of Athenagoras,  
 Thou wert outstript by all in length of days,  
 But in thy measure of deserved praise,  
 Indeed there is none who can thee surpass.  
 (VII. 469.)

## MELEAGER.

Heliodora, tears that pierce the earth,  
 The last gift of my love, receive from me  
 Beyond the grave ; tears shed most bitterly !  
 Alas ! upon thy tomb there is no dearth  
 Of tears, that in past joy have had their birth,  
 Poured in libation to the memory  
 Of faithful love, thus consecrate to thee,  
 To thee, though dead, my only thing of worth.

Where is my flower that Hades plucked ? oh ! where ?  
 An idle sacrifice to Acheron !  
 Dust now defiles its petals blooming fair,  
 Hades hath stolen her, hath stolen her !  
 All mother Earth, I pray thee, gently bear  
 Upon thy breast, her whom all must weep, now gone.  
 (VII. 476.)

## PHILIP OF THESSALONICA.

This tomb Archilochus, the sculptor, rears  
 With piteous hands to Agathanor dead ;  
 And not by steel was this stone chiseled,  
 But worn by dropping of a father's tears.  
 O stone ! rest lightly, that the dead may say,  
 Truly my father's hand this stone did lay.  
 (VII. 554.)

## ANTIPATER.

Aretemias, when from the infernal bark  
 Thou laid'st thy footprint on Cocytus' shore,  
 Bearing in thy young arms thy newborn babe,  
 The lovely Dorian girls, all pitiful  
 At hearing of thy fate, would question thee,  
 And thou through tears did utter these sad words :  
 Twin children have I brought into the world ;  
 One with my husband Euphron did I leave,  
 This other I bring with me to the dead.  
 (VII. 464.)

## LEONIDAS OF ALEXANDRIA.

Dæmon of Argos in this tomb now lying  
 Was he the brother of Deceoteles ?  
 Of Deceoteles. Did echo sighing  
 Repeat these words, or words of truth are these ?  
 Swift comes the answer, Words of truth are these.  
 (VII. 548.)

## MELEAGER.

Lightly, allmother Earth, on Æsigenes rest,  
 Lightly his foot on thee was ever pressed.  
 (VII. 461.)

## ANYTUS.

Antibia I mourn, the tender virgin ;  
 Troops of young lovers to her father came  
 To ask him to bestow her hand in marriage,  
 Since of her wit and beauty great the fame.  
 But cruel Pluto snatched beyond recall  
 Her who united thus the hopes of all.  
 (VII. 490.)

## ANONYMOUS.

Hades the blossom of my youth hath gathered  
 And hidden it 'neath this ancestral stone.  
 In vain my birth, although of a good mother  
 And of Etherius was I the son.



For thus forbid to reap the fruits of learning  
 I languish on the shores of Acheron.  
 O passer-by ! since yet among the living,  
 Parent or child, thou must be either one,  
 Therefore lament, this record when thou readest,  
 For all my youth and learning so soon gone.  
 (VII. 558.)

## ANONYMOUS.

Inexorable Hades, pitiless !  
 The child Callæschrus why didst tear from life ?  
 A plaything in the household of thy wife,  
 His place at home is filled with wretchedness.  
 (VII. 483.)



### CHAPTER III.—THE PROSE.

I.—The Wide Circle of Hellenistic Culture. The Abundance of Intellectual Interests in Alexandria and elsewhere. The Growth of Scholarship. The Spread of Scientific Study. Euclid. Archimedes. Astronomy. Ptolemy. II.—The Importance of this Greek Scientific Work. The Study of Medicine. Galen. His Vast Influence, like that of Ptolemy and Aristotle. Its Long Life and Final Overthrow, Possibly Portending an Altered View of All Things Greek. III.—The Grecian Influence in Rome. The Difference between the Greek and Roman Ideals. IV.—Polybius; his History and its Importance. Extracts. V.—Other Historians: Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Strabo, Flavius Josephus.

#### I.

WE have found abundant traces of the influence of the new learning upon the poetry of Alexandria, and enough has been said to make it clear that this city was the headquarters of every form of intellectual interest. Greece itself had sunk into a dependent colony from which every form of leadership had departed. It was, moreover, an outlying region, remote from the meeting-place of Oriental and Greek thought, and the poverty of the country, due also to its distance from the great trading-places, prevented the accumulation of books, which henceforth were destined to exercise great influence on science and literature. The wealth of Macedonia nourished intellectual interests there. In Syria schools were founded, where rhetoric and philosophy



VIEW OF PERGAMOS, FROM THE WEST, AFTER THE EXCAVATIONS OF 1885.

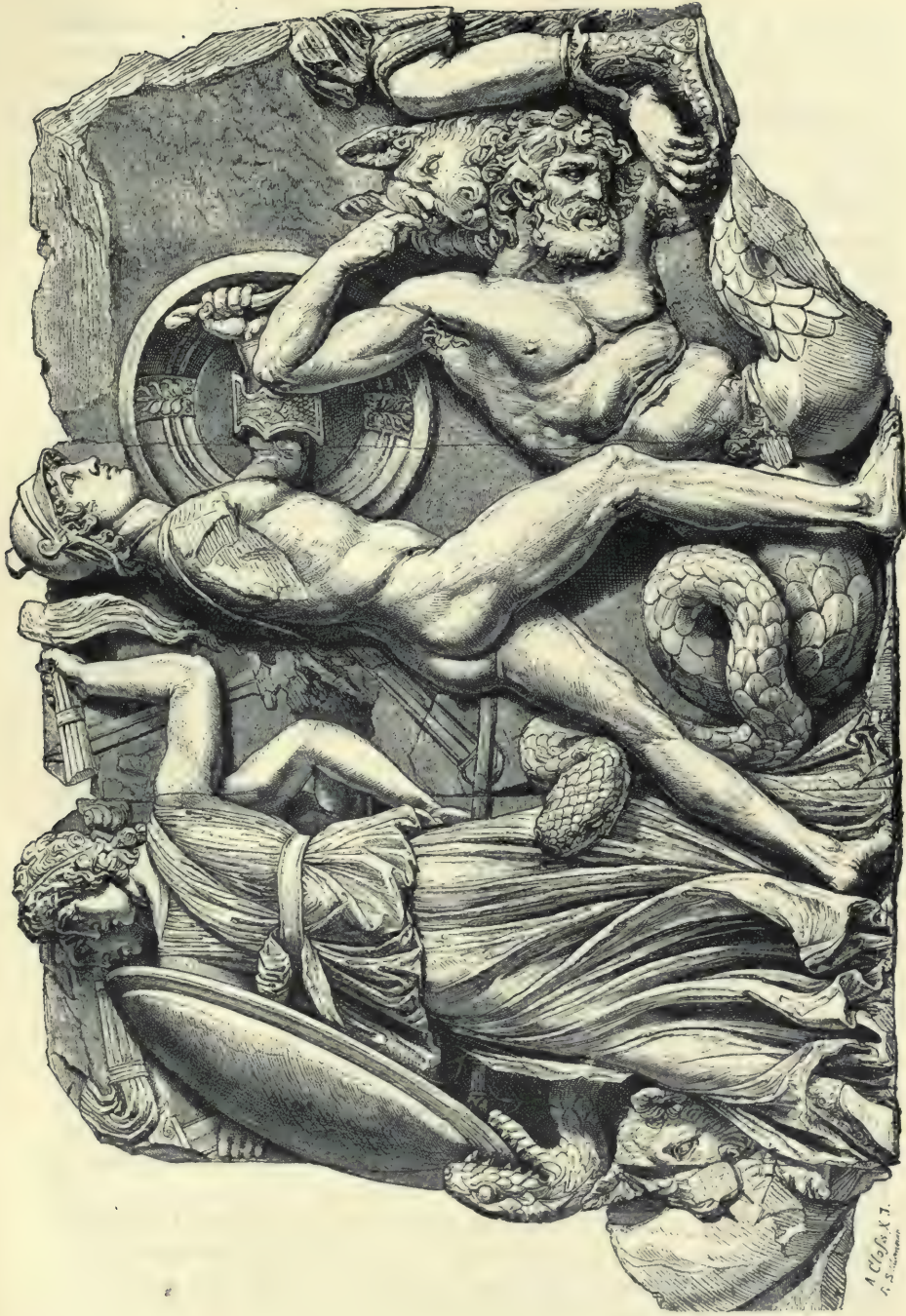
found a new home, such as those of Antioch, Sidon, Ephesus, and Tarsus. More important was Pergamos, where there was a library

second only to that of Alexandria, to which it was afterwards added. The kings of this city, Attalus I., Ermenes II., and Attalus II., indeed were for about a century formidable rivals of the Egyptian city, but after them Pergamos sank into insignificance. The Isle of Rhodes, however, preserved its superiority down to a late period, till at least the second century after Christ. Yet Alexandria was the real home of learning, and the means of transmitting the treasures of Greece to posterity.

It was not for poetasters alone that the library and museum of this city was of service. We have seen that most of these had other claims to distinction, and study of every sort was actively pursued by a busy band of investigators. They separated learning into seven branches, which, as the quadrivium and trivium, survived throughout the Dark Ages, and only in this century, one might say, such is the conservatism of educators, have they undergone serious modification. This long-lived division was thus composed: Grammar, Rhetoric, Dialectic or Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, and Music. Grammar, the first of these, was what we should be inclined to call philology, and consisted of the preparation and explanation of texts. Callimachus, the poet, as has been mentioned, was an authority in this branch of learning. Zenodotus of Ephesus, his predecessor as librarian, was intrusted with the care of collecting and revising the whole body of Greek poetry. Two other men—Alexander the Ætolian and Lycophron the Chalcidian—shared in the labor, and took the tragedies and comedies respectively, while Zenodotus had charge of the Homeric and other epic poems. A full list of all the grammarians of Alexandria whose names and performances have come down to us would read like a directory of that populous city, but among the most eminent may be mentioned Aristophanes of Byzantium, about 264 B.C., and Aristarchus of Samothrace, a century later. It would be hard to exaggerate our indebtedness to these men for their services in preparing the literature of Greece for future times. Living as they did while the means of information were still easy of access, they accumulated vast stores of material and abundant explanations. What Aristarchus did in fixing the Homeric text and by way of illustration and interpretation has been of especial importance to modern students. The proper methods of work being established by these eminent men, lexicons, commentaries, biographies, all the paraphernalia of thorough literary history, were prepared by their many followers.

Nor was it literature alone that attracted their attention. The mythological learning we have seen reflected in the poetry of the Alexandrines, as, for example, in the lost poems of Callimachus. Apollodorus of Athens, part of whose work has escaped destruction,





GROUP FROM THE RECENTLY DISCOVERED SCULPTURES AT PERGAMON.

collected a vast number of myths. Heraclitus, of uncertain date, wrote a book, *On Incredible Things*, which contains brief accounts of some of the most famous legends, which he seeks to explain on some unmiraculous hypothesis. Others were Parthenius of Nicæa, 80 B.C., who collected a number of legendary love-stories, and Heracleides of Pontus.

While pure literature was thus losing its original characteristics, philosophy was fading into complete skepticism, but science, which had long been the mainspring of such life as survived in letters, was thriving in what was more immediately its own territory. So far as it depended on observation, it failed to accomplish any great work: for not only was this important method unknown, or nearly unknown, as Aristotle's practice, in spite of his excellent theory, clearly shows; but the general preference of the Greeks—of which we have had abundant instances—for *a priori* reasoning to painful study and experiment was further encouraged by the philosophical opinion that the senses were untrustworthy guides. In the exact sciences it was different; here neither observation nor the testimony of the senses was invoked, and the abstract truth could not be denied. Hence it was that we notice a marvelous growth in this branch of study. The early philosophers, it will be remembered, had framed many bold hypotheses about the universe which ascribed to number and form curious mystical properties, but a more precise notion of some of the principles of scientific study had developed itself out of these crude beginnings. Geometry, for instance, which, it is said, had taken its rise among the Egyptians from the necessity of continual measurement of the lands overflowed and altered by the annual inundations of the Nile, after being carried to Greece by Thales, found many ardent students there; indeed, it became an important groundwork of education. But it was in its old home, Egypt, that it secured a place as a science in the hands of Euclid, about 300 B.C. It is not to be thought that Euclid was the author of all the propositions that he collected in his famous *Elements*; some were doubtless his, but his main merit lay in his selection and the arrangement of his compilation. For some time this now undoubted fact was denied, for it was imagined that Greek science, like Greek literature, sprang into existence fully formed, without previous growth, by sheer force of genius; but this unwarrantable assumption is now extinct, and without any diminution of Euclid's fame.

While he also wrote treatises on Harmony, Optics, and Catoptrics, which have come down to us, other works of his have failed to reach us. The most valuable of what we have, is the *Elements*, and when it is borne in mind that, as De Morgan said of him, "the sacred



writers excepted, no Greek has been so much read or so variously translated as Euclid," the importance of the scientific work done at Alexandria is not to be easily over-estimated.

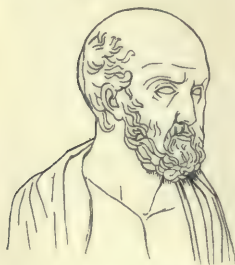
The *Elements* at once took the position that it now holds, becoming the text-book for Greek schools in Alexandria and in other centers of learning, such as Antioch, Damascus, and Edessa, the school of Nestorian Christians. It reached Europe in an interesting way. The book soon attracted the attention of the conquering Arabs, who translated it in the reign of Haroun al Raschid, 786-809 A.D., and carried it to Cordova, whence a copy was obtained by an Englishman in 1120. Other translations followed, but the study of geometry languished, owing to the slavish devotion to Aristotle's logic until the revival of learning. Not until the middle of the last century, however, did it come into common use as a school-book.

In mechanics, Archimedes of Syracuse, about 287-212 B.C., easily held the highest position. Diophantus, of uncertain date, though possibly in the first half of the fourth century of our era, was the first Greek writer on algebra, a subject which was carried further by the Arabs. Apollonius, Eratosthenes, contemporaries of Archimedes, were famous geometers. Among other famous mathematicians was Hypatia, who died A.D. 415, at the mature age of sixty-one, and not as a young girl, as she is represented in Kingsley's novel. Her father, Theon, also deserves mention.

Astronomy grew meanwhile in the hands of Eudoxus, Aristarchus, Eratosthenes, and others. To Aristarchus of Samos, born between 281 and 264 B.C., belongs the credit of framing the heliocentric theory, which then, as well as later, we are told, was regarded as an irreligious notion. The general movement of astronomical theory was away from this guess, which, in the absence of instruments and exact observation, could not be proved; and not until two hundred years later did Hipparchus actually establish astronomy as a science by inventing methods of calculation which enabled men to make sure predictions. He is supposed to have been the first to make a catalogue of all the stars, and apparently he invented trigonometry, which useful method he applied, however, to the geocentric theory. This theory was adopted and developed by Ptolemy, who lived in the second century of our era, and it became the universal explanation of astronomical questions until it was disproved by Copernicus about two hundred and fifty years ago. Ptolemy's great work on astronomy, in which he expounded this theory, was translated into Arabic in the ninth century, and reached Europe as one of the spoils of the Crusaders, being put into Latin about 1200 A.D. The original Greek did not follow until the fifteenth century, and was early printed.



All these instances, and the list is by no means complete, bring abundant testimony of the significance of the scientific movement at this time. Not all the good seed that was sown took root. We have seen that the heliocentric system of Aristarchus of Samos, although it was accepted and developed by Seleucus of Seleucia in Babylonia, miscarried and failed to attain currency against the views of Ptolemy. The geography of Ptolemy, moreover, was a text-book in European schools for fourteen centuries. Nor was it to the mistaken or incomplete contributions alone that credit is due; from that time forth it was known to students that the world was a sphere, and they understood what was meant by the poles, the axis of the earth, the equator, the arctic and antarctic circles, the solstice, etc., etc. Indeed it may be noticed that the constant use of the Greek language in modern times as the source of scientific terminology is in a way a recognition of the deserts of the Alexandrines and their contemporaries, who gave the names to their discoveries to which later investigators have been compelled to adapt the new nomenclature. Hence the traditions of the beginnings of exact science are preserved in its terminology, just as the growth of the sciences starting from observation, that was at this time somewhat neglected, bear proof of their separate history in the common names of objects. This is testified by the presence of Greek names in, for example, anatomical terms, although anatomy is a subject which made less advance among the Alexandrine Greeks than one might have expected in view of their untiring zeal in acquiring learning. It was, to be sure, studied at this time, but its free



HIPPOCRATES.

growth was impeded by the necessity of dissecting apes and other animals rather than human subjects—a fact due probably to the long survival of the Greek reverence for the human body; but such success as they attained—and it is very considerable—is indicated by the terminology, and later discoveries tell their history in the same way.

The science of medicine was in fact established by Hippocrates, the contemporary of Pericles; it was in no wise discovered or created by him, for the history of Greek medicine, or rather of surgery, finds it already established—to be sure in great simplicity—in the Homeric poems. What Hippocrates did was to co-ordinate the results of long experience and study, to build up a tolerably complete edifice out of the material already provided by remoter generations. He brought new contributions to the common stock, it is true, but he created nothing, and medical science not at all.

During many centuries a crude system of therapeutics had been

growing up, the origin of which was ascribed in popular tradition to Asclepius, who was said to have introduced the healing art into Greece from Egypt. Temples were dedicated to this son of Apollo, whither the sick would resort to receive advice through dreams and from the priests, who took care to preserve records of approved remedies. These were also inscribed upon separate tablets in the temples, and were further disseminated among the populace by the Asclepiads, who established schools, notably at Cnidos and Cos, which last was in existence 600 B.C. There, too, Hippocrates received his early medical education. It was, moreover, in these schools that the Hippocratic oath was first formulated. Other contributions to early information on the subject came from the men in charge of gymnasia, who naturally had acquired skill in treating the sprains, bruises, and fractures, as well as more complicated results of accidents and overwork. Hippocrates himself is alleged to have been a lineal descendant of Asclepius on his father's side, and on his mother's of Heracles, the inventor of baths, among other claims to respect; possibly the fact that she was by profession a midwife may have had as much influence in determining his tastes as his divine descent. For many centuries he remained the greatest of physicians, and the work that he accomplished is the foundation of the present science. After his death, medicine knew the same fate as the rest of the intellectual work of the Greeks, and it was in Alexandria, the new home of intelligence, that it woke up again to life. The study of anatomy began there under the direction of Herophilus, about 300 B.C., and of Erasistratus, 280 B.C., while the whole medical work of the Greeks culminated in Galen, who was born at Pergamos, 131 A.D. He was a most fertile writer, for he composed one hundred and twenty-five works on philosophical, mathematical, grammatical, and legal subjects, and on medicine one hundred and thirty-one, of which last eighty-three have come down to us. He, too, profited by the anatomical studies of Alexandria, but the full value of this aid was much impaired by the decay of the zealous investigations established by the anatomists just mentioned. After their death medical science became tainted with philosophy, and two schools, the Empirical and the Dogmatic, who really prolonged the controversy between the followers of Herophilus and Erasistratus concerning the merits of Hippocrates, devoted their time to discussion rather than to study. The Empirics maintained that



ASCLEPIUS.



practice was sufficient for any physician, that groping among muscles and bones was pedantic waste of time, and their rivals held exactly opposite views, thus maintaining a quarrel which is eternal between men with regard to the proper use of scientific methods. As one result, direct anatomical investigation gradually disappeared; the study was regarded as degrading, subjects became rare, Galen himself dissected apes rather than human bodies, vivisection was denounced as cruel by men who saw nothing wrong in gladiatorial combats, as it is now attacked by sportsmen when they are resting from the chase. But what was a more perturbing influence upon the merit of Galen's work was his devoted allegiance to the philosophy of Aristotle, but on the other hand this adherence to the Stagirite gave him for centuries an indisputable place alongside of that intellectual tyrant. Only since medicine has freed itself of alliance with philosophical theories has it really grown to maturity, yet, in spite of its theoretical defects, the practical merits of the Greek system accomplished a vast amount of good; indeed, it may be said that the results of the work of the Alexandrines in medicine are second only to what they accomplished in grammatical study, and the terminology of anatomical science attests their conquests just as the names of towns in America indicate the race of those who founded them. Nor was it in these studies alone that their mark was left; dietetics, pharmacy, and surgery made great advance, and Greek physicians made their way into remote regions. To have studied in Alexandria was in itself a warrant of knowledge and skill. Yet, of course, not all they taught still finds approval; in pharmacy, for example, they recommended most detestable witches' broth, and compounded vile messes that flourished throughout the Middle Ages, and still survive to the delight of rustics; but they at least made a beginning.

Galen appears to have enjoyed far less fame while living than that which afterward gathered about his name; for that matter, no one lifetime could have known such great celebrity, but his reputation for enormous learning was very great. He was regarded as a receptacle of the wisdom of that time in other matters, too, than medicine. Only after his death, however, did he acquire the position he so long held as the one great leader of medicine. The overthrow of his authority, as well as that of the Ptolemaic system—which were curiously near in time—and the diminution of Aristotle's once omnipotent sway, are interesting and suggestive facts in the history of thought, for it may be that they possibly forebode a similar reconstruction of men's opinions in other matters, when it shall be seen that the whole literary fabric of Greece, built up as it was on a form of rhetorical expression that owed its sonority to religious enthusiasm, must give way before



simpler methods of statement. As it is at present, modern literature obviously rests on that of Greece, and the most admired models of that country were the natural development of emotional utterances that have now become mere literary traditions. Its poetry grew out of a form of religious feeling that is a thing wholly of the past, and the prose developed out of the artificial, complicated construction of the dithyramb; its antitheses and balanced phrases pervaded the work of all the orators and prose-writers, carrying with it a general impression of the great value of mere rhetoric. In modern times the conditions are altered, and the unsatisfactoriness of the old inspiration may perhaps be seen in the dependence of literature on conventional models that are now authorities, but not truly inspiring sources, as they were in their own time.

The solvent that has wrought the momentous change in the way of regarding the universe is science. It has altered the old way of regarding the world; it destroyed the authority of Galen and Ptolemy and inflicted grievous blows on Aristotle; since it has thus affected our knowledge of facts, it brings forth new lessons from the facts, and evokes different emotions, which demand other forms of expression. In other words, the emotional, wondering way of regarding life is being superseded by the enormous collection of facts that science is amassing, and the phraseology that was used to express obsolescent emotion sits ill on modern ways of thought and feeling. When men's minds were filled with awe they spoke differently from men who are forever dispassionately seeking and finding explanations of all observed phenomena,—indeed, the mere habit of scientific statement cannot be without influence; while the change of mental attitude must in time be as apparent in men's words as in their thoughts, and then Greek literature will doubtless retain its place as a perfectly natural expression of great and important thoughts, but it will perhaps be no longer considered necessary to say a thing in a certain way because the Greeks so said it.

At present the worst thing about literature is that it is made up to too great an extent of literary methods. This vice began to make its appearance with the downfall of Hellenic independence, and, as Horace said, conquered Greece soon made captive conquering Rome. From Rome it has been bequeathed to Europe, and thence it has naturally found its way over the rest of the civilized world.

### III.

That new capital of the world, Rome, attracted countless Greeks of various kinds, and the Greek language became a necessary part of

the education of every cultivated Roman. As we shall see later, that city became the home of educated Greeks who gave instruction in their own language, in rhetoric, and in philosophy. They swarmed thither in such numbers that the senate twice passed laws expelling them from the city as corrupters of the sterner Roman virtue. Indeed, the rigid Cato objected to Greek physicians, and sought to have his fellow-countrymen allowed to die in the old-fashioned way. In spite of this morbid patriotism, however, the superiority of the Greek literature and philosophy asserted itself and found admirers and followers in their new home. The language became a common medium for the cultivated classes, not only in Rome, but throughout the civilized world. The Greeks, who possessed all the flower of culture, did not need to study foreign tongues, and they appear not to have devoted themselves to acquiring them, any more than did the French in the last century when all people of education had to learn that language. Thus, not long after the Macedonian conquest, Berosus in Babylon, Menander in Tyre, and Manetho in Egypt, compiled the annals of their country from original sources, writing them in Greek for the use of Greeks. When medicine, philosophy, astronomy, and doubtless literature, made their way eastward, it was by means of translations into the various tongues; and these translations, obviously enough, were not made by the Greeks themselves. In Rome, as was said above, Greek was universally known by all educated men. Nor was it merely the excellence of Greek learning and letters that gave this language so great importance. Ever since the Greek colonists had moved westward to Sicily and southern Italy their influence had been felt, and traces of it abound in early Italian history. The Greeks had given the Italians their alphabet, had taught them to read and to write, and the number of Greek words incorporated at an early date into the Latin shows how much the Italians were indebted to them for the beginnings of civilization. The Italian mythology was made over into a close imitation of that of Greece.

The full extent of the dependence of the Romans will be made clear when we come to the study of their literature, where it will be seen how thoroughly their civilization drew its life from the smaller country. Here it is well, however, to show its effect upon the Greeks, who were only maintained in their very natural pride by their acknowledged superiority. No one of them looked upon the Romans as their intellectual equals; they never studied the Latin language except so far as their business required, and the Latin literature they almost wholly ignored. This superiority to their conquerors in matters of art and literature fully made up to them for the lack of material power; they were able to despise the gross success of their



conquerors, and by their continual assertion of their own excellence they undoubtedly helped to preserve their authority, for the continual assertion of one's merits is the surest method of obtaining recognition.

While the Greeks have not failed to receive the praise which is due to their marvelous performance, there is yet one thing of which at times sight has been lost, and that is how very nearly literature and art were the sole outlet for the energies of an active-minded people. With the Romans they were but a part of a large number of interests, some of which were directly hostile to an intellectual or artistic life. The meagre size of Greece, its lack of vast political ideals, its provincialism in matters of statecraft, all tended to diminish the number of distracting interests, and enabled the attention of intelligent men to concentrate itself upon literature and art. It was in very much the same way that the sufferings of the Jews intensified their religious fervor; while, on the other hand, the large ambitions and wide interests of the Romans left art and letters subordinate to the many conflicting claims of practical life. In both Greece and Rome, as elsewhere, enthusiasm expressed itself in literature and art, but in Greece these were more exclusively the outlets than in other countries. Hence we may be justified in reminding those who find their ideals of life in that land alone, that its undeniable merit was purchased at the cost of many things which also have their preciousness and importance, and that it is possible to pay too high a price for literary and artistic excellence, if these can be attained only with any sensible diminution of other interests, political, social, or scientific. The wider range of objects pursued may necessarily involve a change, which will seem ruinous to those who demand that the future, to be admirable, must repeat the past. All this, it should be said, is far from a denial of the deserts of the Greeks.

#### IV.

All these facts show how closely bound was Rome with Greece, and in the history of Polybius, a Greek, which he wrote in his own language, we may see the maturer Hellenic mind applied to the study of events after a fashion that the Romans could not then imitate. Polybius was born at Megalopolis, a city in Arcadia, about 204 B.C. His father was one of the leading men in the Achæan League, that attempt at federation of Greek states which followed upon the feeble alliances that crumbled before the single-hearted power of Macedon. Unsatisfactory as the League was, it held out against that country and only succumbed to Rome. In 167 B.C. Polybius was carried to that city as a hostage, among a thousand of his countrymen, and remained in exile for seventeen years. Dur-



ing this long absence from home Polybius was able to observe the Roman civilization, and his intimacy with the sons of Æmilius Paulus, and particularly with the one who was afterwards Scipio Africanus the younger, was of especial service: he accompanied him on his various campaigns, and later he was present with him at the conquest of Carthage. This experience taught Polybius how hopeless would be any resistance of the Achæans to the invincible might of Rome, and he urged his fellow-countrymen to accept the inevitable and make the best terms they could. Like most good advice, however, that which he gave was found to be sound only when the opposite had been followed. After the Achæans had been defeated they acknowledged their error, and put up a statue to Polybius that bore an inscription saying that, if his words had been followed, Hellas would have been saved. Polybius was able to mitigate some of the severities that the Romans had imposed upon their prostrate foes, and for this intervention he received new honors. This was about 145 B.C., and the rest of his life, that is to say, until about 122 B.C., he appears to have devoted to the preparation and composition of his history. This history consisted of forty books and covered the period between 220 and 146 B.C. The first date was that at which the history of Timæus, since lost, came to an end. The other date was chosen as that when Corinth fell and the independence of Greece vanished. At first the history consisted of two distinct parts, afterwards combined into a single work. In the first of these he began with the Second Punic War, the Social War in Greece, and the war between Antiochus and Ptolemy Philopater in Asia, and ended with the overthrow of the Macedonian kingdom in 168 B.C. The second part continued the history until the date above mentioned. It should be added that the whole was introduced by a brief sketch of Roman history between the capture of the city by the Gauls and the beginning of the second Punic War, with abundant references to other contemporary events.

Polybius has suffered from the fact that he was not one of the classic Greek historians; he has experienced a full share of the contempt that educated men have felt and expressed for everything Greek that belongs to the post-Athenian period, and has been a victim of a blight as mysterious and unreasonable as social distinctions. Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon are in the blue book; Polybius lives beyond the recognized borders; he is a social waif. This is, however, scarcely a distinction that can be acknowledged by a student, and besides the importance of the historian's statements, there is in his work a quality that demands attention and admiration: this is his conception of history as a branch of science. He certainly lacks the charm of Herodotus, the unrivaled dignity of Thucydides,

and the graceful art of Xenophon, but the aim of his history, to point out,

“in what manner, and through what kind of government, almost the whole habitable world, in less than fifty-three years, was reduced beneath the Roman yoke,”

clearly shows a wide comprehension of his task. He did not merely chronicle events; he saw, what it is always difficult for a contemporary to see, their real universal significance and their relation to the world's progress.

“Before this period,” he says with regard to the date he had chosen for beginning, “the great transactions of the world were single, distinct, and unconnected, both in place and time; while each proceeded from motives peculiar to itself, and was directed to its proper end. But from this time history assumes an entire and perfect body. The affairs of Italy and Africa were now conjoined with those of Asia and of Greece: and all moved together towards one fixed and single point.”

He was then justified in boasting that he was the first to write a universal history.

“There are many, indeed, who have written an account of particular wars: and among them, some perhaps have added a few coincident events. But no man, as far at least as I can learn, has ever yet employed his pains, in collecting all the great transactions of the world into one regular and consistent body; remarking also the time of their commencement, the motives to which they owed their birth, and the end to which they were directed. I therefore judged it to be a task that might prove highly useful to the world, to rescue from oblivion this great and most instructive act of Fortune. For in all the vast variety of disorders, struggles, changes, which the power of this deity introduces into human life, we shall find none equal to that long and desperate scene of contention, none worthy to be compared for their importance with those events which have happened in the present age.”

Certainly this is no exaggeration of the importance of the Punic Wars and of the overthrow of the Macedonian dominion, to say nothing of the subjection of Greece to this new power, and it is easy to see how deeply Polybius must have been influenced by the sight of Macedonia, recently the conqueror of the world, yielding in its turn to the Romans, who,

“disdaining to confine their conquests within the limits of a few countries only, have forced almost the whole habitable world to pay submission to their laws: and have raised their empire to that vast height of power, which is so much the wonder of the present age, and which no future times can ever hope to exceed.”



History became universal when events clearly modified the whole civilized world.

Such then was the grand aim of Polybius, one that has been followed by those later historians who have endeavored to show the mutual connections of events in history with one another. Another question is the manner of the performance. As a narrator, Polybius often lacks the attractive qualities of his great predecessors, yet it cannot be denied that he has well observed his rule of stating the connection between the various incidents that he records. This becomes clear when we remember that he finds the principle animating and conducting these great changes, not in any great man, but in the Roman people themselves. There is no hero in his history, but it teaches us what Rome was and did in its early steps to greatness. Thus in speaking of the difference between Carthage, which employed mercenaries, and Rome with its army of citizens, he says:

"Hence it happens, that the Romans, though at first defeated, are always able to renew the war; and that the Carthaginian armies never are renewed without great difficulty. Add to this, that the Romans, fighting for their country and their children, never suffer their ardor to be slackened; but persist with same steady spirit, till they become superior to their enemies."

This spirit of analysis carries him further; thus a few pages later we find him saying:

"But among all the useful institutions that demonstrate the superior excellence of the Roman government, the most considerable perhaps is the opinion which the people are taught to hold concerning the gods: and that which other men regard as an object of disgrace appears in my judgment to be the very thing by which this republic chiefly is sustained. I mean Superstition. . . . The ancients therefore acted not absurdly, nor without good reason, when they inculcated the notions concerning the gods, and the belief of infernal punishments; but much more those of the present age are to be charged with rashness and absurdity, in endeavouring to extirpate these opinions."

For among the Greeks, he goes on to say, there is no honesty, and among the Romans no taint of crime, in the treatment of public moneys.

This tendency of Polybius to see things in their full importance, and to describe them with a view to the instruction which they can give to his readers, is one that throws considerable light upon the intellectual interests of his time, for every historian, like every thinking man, is affected by the period in which he lives. Just as Sir Walter Scott's vivid and picturesque presentation of the Middle Ages, itself the result of the renewed interest in the past and the intensity given to national patriotism by the Napoleonic wars, made over the methods



of historians who followed him and taught them something of his brilliancy in drawing the past; and just as now a historian only discharges his duty when he explains the growth and coherence of events, so the method of Polybius shows him the product of a time when science ruled and helped to modify men's way of thinking. We find science not only in the books of geometers and astronomers, but also affecting the poets; and in the rationalizing of Polybius, in his orderly arrangement and search for hidden causes, we may detect the contemporary of the great grammarians, mathematicians, and astronomers. The vastness of his design indicates the new views that existed concerning the power of accumulated learning to interpret even the widest problems. The decay of the Greek notion of the importance of the city as the political unit is another token of the broader scope of intellectual interests in these later times.

The work of Polybius does not have its sole value as an indication and expression of the cosmopolitanism which the Romans were unconsciously putting into practice from reasons of state, just as England has extended its power over the globe from a series of reasons that had been based on pounds and shillings; nor is its only interest that of indicating the intellectual activity of the Greek mind. What we have to be additionally grateful for is that we have any history at all of this period. Polybius is the first to break the silence of a century and a half which is the long stretch of time between the death of Xenophon and his birth. There were, to be sure, plenty of historians of greater or less degree during that interval; the names of more than one hundred have come down to us, but their names alone; time has spared us practically nothing of their work. Of Polybius we have, to be sure, the recital of but the half-century after 219 B.C., but this is of great importance in the general dearth of information.

Now, of all the precautions that have been mentioned, the first to which a commander should attend, is that of observing secrecy. That neither the joy which springs from an unexpected prospect of success, nor yet the dread of a miscarriage; that neither friendship nor affection may prevail upon him, to communicate his design to any persons, except those alone without whose assistance it cannot be carried into execution: and not even to these, till the time in which their services are severally required obliges him to disclose it. Nor is it necessary only, that the tongue be silent; but much more, that the mind also make not any discovery. For it has often happened, that men, who have carefully restrained themselves from speaking, have sometimes by their countenance alone, and sometimes by their actions, very clearly manifested their designs. A second thing to be considered are the different routes, either by day or by night, and the manner of performing them, both upon land and sea. The third, and indeed the greatest object is, to know the differences of the times that depend upon the heavens; and to be able to accommodate them to the execution of any design. Nor is the manner of executing any enterprize to be regarded as a point of small importance. For this alone has often made things practicable which appeared to be impossible; and rendered others impracticable, which were easy to be performed. In the last place, great attention should be paid to signals and counter-

signals; as well as to the choice of the persons, through whose means, and with whose assistance, the undertaking is to be accomplished.

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Among the things that are to be learned in this method, one of the most necessary is the investigation of the theory of the days and nights. If indeed the days and nights were at all times equal, there would be no need of study, in order to acquire a knowledge which would in that case be common and obvious to all. But since they are different, not only each from the other, but also from themselves, it is plainly a matter of great importance, to know the laws by which they are severally diminished or increased. For, unless he be acquainted with these differences, how shall a commander be able to measure with exactness the time of a concerted march, either by night or by day? How can he be assured, without this knowledge, that he shall not either arrive too early, or too late? It happens also upon such occasions, and indeed upon such alone, that the first of these mistakes is more dangerous than the other. For he who arrives too late, is only forced to abandon his design. Perceiving his error, while he is yet at a distance, he may return back again with safety. But he who comes before the appointed time, being discovered by the enemy upon his approach, not only fails in the intended enterprize, but is in danger also of suffering an entire defeat. It is time indeed, which principally governs in all human actions; and most particularly in the affairs of war. A commander therefore should be perfectly acquainted with the time of the summer and the winter solstice; the equinoxes; and the different degrees of the diminution or increase of the nights and days, as they fall between the equinoctial points. For this is the only method that can enable him to adjust his motions to the course of time, either by land or sea.

Thus again King Philip, when he attempted to take Melite in the manner that has before been mentioned, was guilty of a double error. For not only the ladders which he carried were too short; but he failed also with respect to the time. Instead of coming to the place in the middle of the night, as it had been concerted, when the people would have been all fast asleep, he began his march from Larissa at an early hour; and, having entered the territory of the Melitæans, as it was neither safe for him to halt, lest the enemy should gain notice of his approach, nor possible to return back again without being perceived, he was compelled by necessity to advance, and arrived at the city before the inhabitants were yet gone to rest. But as he could not scale the walls, because the ladders were not proportioned to the height; so neither was he able to enter through the gate, because the time of the attack prevented his friends that were within the city from favouring his entrance. At last therefore, having only provoked the rage of the inhabitants, and lost many of his men, he was forced to return back without accomplishing his purpose; and instructed all mankind for the time to come, to be suspicious of his designs, and set themselves on their guard against him.

## V.

After his death there occurs another period of silence, and indeed we may say that of the two centuries before the Christian era our information is far scantier than is that of two centuries earlier. Two hundred names, thus averaging one for each year, show the extent of our loss, but excepting the five books and the fragments of Polybius, the abridgment of the mythological and genealogical history of Apollodorus, and Sallust, Cæsar, Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Livy, we have nothing. All of the works of these writers, with the single exception of Cæsar, have been handed down to us in a mutilated condition, and the crumbs that we have received from so full a feast give us but an insufficient record of a momentous age.

Diodorus Siculus, or the Sicilian—he was born at Agyrium, in



Sicily—was a contemporary of Cæsar and Augustus; his exact dates, however, are not known. He tells us that he spent thirty years preparing for the composition of his history by traveling in Europe and Asia, as well as in Egypt, and that Latin as well as Greek sources were open to him. His aim was a grand one:

“Having diligently perused and examined the works of several authors, I determined to compose an entire history, from which the reader might reap much advantage, with little labour and pains.”

This he wrote in forty books, beginning with the Trojan War and ending with 60 B.C., the date of Cæsar's consulship, a period of about eleven hundred years. The first six books contained the early history of Asia and the Greeks; the next eleven carried the story on to the death of Alexander the Great; and the remainder narrated further events until Cæsar's war against the Gauls. Of this work we have the first five books, recounting the early history of Egypt, Ethiopia, Asia, and Greece, and books 11–20, from the beginning of the second Persian War to the death of Alexander, and but fragments of the rest. This work, which its author called a historical library, even in the defective state in which it reaches us thus covers a great deal of ground. It lacks, however, great interest, belonging as it does to a time when books were made by compilation from various authorities, with no marked discretion in the choice. Moreover, he has confused what was already obscure by a number of chronological inaccuracies. It is cruel to be ungrateful for any light that can be thrown on Greek history, but that which Diodorus gives us has found anything but lavish praise.

The early history of the Romans was written by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, where he was born in the second quarter of the last century before Christ. He betook himself to Rome in 29 B.C., probably giving instruction there in rhetoric, and preparing his history. He wrote a number of books on both subjects. Those on rhetoric are intelligent; and his history, although his method ill bears the test of modern scientific examination, contains a vast mass of information. Obviously, archæology was then an unknown science, and the explanation of the past lay beyond the powers of any man, but the accumulation of material that he made has been found of service in later times.

With these men should be mentioned Strabo, who lived from about 60 B.C. until about 24 A.D., and was thus a contemporary of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. His *Description of the Earth*, in seventeen books, contains abundant historical facts, besides many interesting descriptions of places that the author had himself seen. It was



not a mere geography that he wrote, but rather a sort of manual of general information about the different regions he describes.

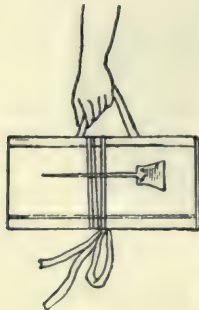
Flavius Josephus, born about 37 A.D., is a marked instance of the cosmopolitanism that was growing up with the increasing power of Rome. He was a Jew of distinguished descent who saw the invincibility of Rome, and wrote his histories for the purpose of commending the Jews to their conquerors. It would be unfair to explain this intention on the part of the historian as a simple lack of patriotism. An acknowledgment of the power of Rome was at that time no more than an acknowledgment of the power of civilization. We have seen that city absorbing the intellectual activity of the Greeks, and that the Jews should seek to find a place in it was neither strange nor new. In Alexandria, ever since its foundation, they had begun the life they have since led of comparative political isolation within the state. They were then, as now, active in trade, and an element of great importance in Rome as well as elsewhere. That Josephus should have endeavored to set his fellow-religionists in a favorable light was perhaps the best service that he could have done them. His history of the Jewish War, which he first composed in his own language and then translated into Greek, was much admired in Rome, where the author was treated with great respect. Another book, on Jewish Antiquities, in twenty books, begins with the creation of the world and brings the record down to 66 A.D., when Nero was emperor. Here he made an especial effort to conciliate the Romans, speaking of the books of the Old Testament as nothing more than ancient history, with no claim to divine authority. Yet he makes very clear the difference between Judaism and Paganism, in spite of his efforts to smooth them away.

When Moses had thus addressed himself to God, he smote the sea with his rod, which parted asunder at the stroke, and receiving those waters into itself, left the ground dry, as a road, and place of flight for the Hebrews. Now when Moses saw this appearance of God, and that the sea went out of its own place, and left dry land, he went first of all into it, and bid the Hebrews to follow him along that divine road, and to rejoice at the danger their enemies that followed them were in; and gave thanks to God for this so surprising a deliverance which appeared from him.

Now while these Hebrews made no stay, but went on earnestly, as led by God's presence with them, the Egyptians supposed at first that they were distracted, and were going rashly upon manifest destruction. But when they saw that they were gone a great way without any harm, and that no obstacle or difficulty fell in their journey, they made haste to pursue them, hoping that the sea would be calm for them also. They put their horse foremost, and went down themselves into the sea. Now the Hebrews, while these were putting on their armour, and therein spending their time, were beforehand with them, and escaped them, and got first over to the land on

the other side without any hurt. Whence the others were encouraged, and more courageously pursued them, as hoping no harm would come to them neither : but the Egyptians were not aware that they went into a road made for the Hebrews, and not for others ; that this road was made for the deliverance of those in danger, but not for those that were earnest to make use of it for the others' destruction. As soon, therefore, as ever the whole Egyptian army was within it, the sea flowed to its own place, and came down with a torrent raised by storms of wind, and encompassed the Egyptians. Showers of rain also came down from the sky, and dreadful thunders, and lightning, and flashes of fire. Thunderbolts also were darted upon them. Nor was there any thing which used to be sent by God upon men, as indications of his wrath, which did not happen at this time, for a dark and dismal night oppressed them. And thus did all these men perish, so that there was not one man left to be a messenger of this calamity to the rest of the Egyptians. But the Hebrews were not able to contain themselves for joy at their wonderful deliverance, and destruction of their enemies ; now indeed supposing themselves firmly delivered, when those that would have forced them into slavery were destroyed, and when they found they had God so evidently for their protector. And now these Hebrews having escaped the danger they were in, after this manner, and besides that, seeing their enemies punished in such a way as is never recorded of any other men whomsoever, were all the night employed in singing of hymns and in mirth. Moses also composed a song unto God, containing his praises, and a thanksgiving for his kindness, in Hexameter verse.

As for myself, I have delivered every part of this history as I found it in the sacred books. Nor let any one wonder at the strangeness of the narration, if a way were discovered to those men of old time, who were free from the wickedness of the modern ages, whether it happened by the will of God, or whether it happened of its own accord ; while, for the sake of those that accompanied Alexander, king of Macedonia, who yet lived comparatively but a little while ago, the Pamphylian sea retired and afforded a passage through itself, when they had no other way to go ; I mean, when it was the will of God to destroy the monarchy of the Persians. And this is confessed to be true by all that have written about the actions of Alexander. But as to these events, let every one determine as he pleases.





## CHAPTER IV.—PLUTARCH.

I.—Plutarch. His Life and Work. His Method. His Attractive Simplicity. His Influence. II.—His Naturalness and Impartiality. III.—Extracts. IV.—His Morals. Extracts.

### I.

PERHAPS the most important of the later historians is Plutarch, who did more than any other man toward making posterity acquainted with both Greeks and Romans. He was born at Chæronia,



PLUTARCH.

in Bœotia, about the middle of the first century of our era. Like most ambitious young Greeks he found his way to Rome, the capital of the world, where he gave instruction in philosophy and rhetoric to audiences eager to absorb Greek culture. While in Italy he used only his own language, which was familiar to all cultivated people. Later he returned to his native city, where he held positions of honor, and he appears to have been also a priest of Apollo at Delphi. The work which has made him famous is his *Lives of Eminent Greeks and Romans*, which he composed probably after his return to Chæronia. The date of his death is unknown. These biographies, or *Parallel Lives*, as he called them, are forty-six in number, and appear in the

following order: 1. Theseus and Romulus. 2. Lycurgus and Numa. 3. Solon and Valerius Publicola. 4. Themistocles and Camillus. 5. Pericles and Q. Fabius Maximus. 6. Alcibiades and Coriolanus.



7. Timoleon and Aemilius Paulus. 8. Pelopidas and Marcellus. 9. Aristides and Cato the Elder. 10. Philopœmon and Flaminius. 11. Pyrrhus and Marius. 12. Lycander and Sulla. 13. Cimon and Lucullus. 14. Nicias and Crassus. 15. Ermenes and Sertorius. 16. Agesilaus and Pompeius. 17. Alexander and Cæsar. 18. Phocion and Cato the Younger. 19. Agis and Cleomenes, and the two Gracchi, Tiberius and Caius. 20. Demosthenes and Cicero. 21. Demetrius Poliorketes and Marcus Antonius. 22. Dion and M. Junius Brutus. Lives of Artaxerxes Mnemon, Aratus, Galbo and Otho, and, in some editions, of Homer, follow these, although with no parallel order. The following biographies have been lost: Epaminondas, Scipio, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Vitellius, Hesiod, Pindar, Crates the Cynic, Daïphantus, Aristomenes, and the poet Aratus.

His aim was a modest one; in his *Life of Alexander* he acknowledged that he did not give the actions in full detail, and with a scrupulous exactness, but rather in a short summary, because he was writing not histories, but lives.

"Nor is it," he goes on, "always in the most distinguished achievements that men's virtues or vices may be best discerned; but very often an action of small note, a short saying, or a jest, shall distinguish a person's real character more than the greatest sieges or the most important battles. Therefore, as painters in their portraits labour the likeness in the face, and particularly about the eyes, in which the peculiar turn of mind most appears, and run over the rest with a more careless hand; so we must be permitted to strike off the features of the soul, in order to give a real likeness of these great men, and leave to others the circumstantial detail of their labours and achievements."

The faults which he enumerates have been detected by many readers; and attention has been often called to his errors, especially in the Roman lives, and to the disorderly arrangement that is to be found in nearly all. Yet, granting these flaws, the existence of which he was the first to point out, it is yet undeniable that he succeeded in what he undertook to do, and this was to represent, so far as he could, the personal characteristics of the various leading men of Greece and Rome. The time in which he wrote was one of moral decay, and by his pictures of a nobler past he hoped to revive an interest in virtue and right living. So much he did not accomplish, for it was impossible for any series of biographies to avert the decadence of Roman civilization; but the *Lives* have been of great importance in modern times, not only on account of the information which they have contained about the ancients, but also as direct stimulants to men who were seeking for good models. The conditions under which he wrote nat-

usually modified his way of looking at the past, and to a contemporary of Nero it would seem that the one thing the world lacked was political virtue, hence Plutarch sets the portraits of wise rulers and leaders in such a light as shall best convey moral instruction. This he has done by presenting them as human beings, by recording their personal traits rather than the marches and countermarches of their campaigns, by giving us the information for which there is an eternal and insatiable hunger, that, namely, about the nature of men, not human nature in the abstract—the appetite for that is soon stayed—but as it has appeared in the past and appears to-day, not merely in emperors and generals, but in our fellow-citizens and next-door neighbors. Hence almost the only persons of antiquity whom we may be said to know are those who have been fortunate enough to have him for their biographer; of the undistinguished citizens we know scarcely anything. He has filled a gallery with statues of illustrious men copied from the life. One result of this has been that we always think of the ancients as a collection of statues, our only conception of them is as doing some important thing; we have no knowledge of anything else. Plutarch is by far the most valuable interpreter that we have between antiquity and modern times, and in these holds a position unshared by any classic or post-classic writer. Another result of the vividness of his representation of great men has been his authority at two distinct periods in modern history when individuality has made its appearance as a novel force. It is not a mere accident that Plutarch enjoyed a revival of fame at the time of the Renaissance, when egoism broke the monotonous bonds of the Middle Ages, and again in the last century when the modern hero entered poetry and fiction as the representative of the development of personality as a social and political force. Amyot's translation of Plutarch's *Lives* in 1559—it appeared in English form, twenty years later,—gave the men of that generation not a mere collection of rare facts, but new views of life. As Plutarch's best pupil, Montaigne, said, speaking of the studies suitable for a young man: "What profit shall he not reap, as to the business of men, by reading the lives of Plutarch? But, withal, let my tutor remember to what end his instructions are principally directed, and that he does not so much imprint in his pupil's memory the date of the ruin of Carthage, as the manners of Hannibal and Scipio; nor so much where Marcellus died, as why it was unworthy of his duty that he died there." He was certainly justified in saying that he never seriously settled himself to the reading of any book of solid learning but Plutarch and Seneca. Indeed Plutarch was a writer of the highest authority among Montaigne's contemporaries, as with Bacon and all of the men of that day who were seeking to draw inspiration from



antiquity. North's Plutarch inspired three of Shakspeare's plays,—Julius Cæsar, Antony and Cleopatra, and Coriolanus,—and the book was doubtless the most important part of his classical education, as it was that of many generations of readers. Moreover, although Shakspeare drew the suggestions of his plays from many different sources, he never followed Bandello or any Italian novelist with half the fidelity that he showed in constructing his Julius Cæsar, for instance, on the very words of Plutarch. What higher proof could there be of the biographer's vividness and truth? The list of the distinguished men who admired him is a long one: Racine, Bayle, Henri IV. were among the early ones in France; Falkland, Clarendon, and Sydney, in England, drew lessons in courage and patriotism from his pages. While Plutarch never lost his popularity, we may notice a recrudescence of his authority in the latter half of the eighteenth century, when the lessons that were taught in his Lives found apt pupils among a generation who were preparing for an outbreak against despotism. Rousseau, Franklin, and others took delight in the pictures of great men, and the influence of the book may be seen in the imitation of Plutarch's heroes by the distinguished personages of the time. The very name of the Society of the Cincinnati; the pseudonyms under which patriots conveyed their thoughts to the world, such as Gracchus and Publicola, as well as the countless references to his pages, make clear the extent of Plutarch's influence.

## II.

The quality by means of which he moved his readers at these important periods is that of drawing the men as they were. In this art he is a master, and it is the more conspicuous on account of his dim vision of great movements in history. Of vast political complications he has nothing to say; he knows only the men who were conspicuous in them, and these he brings before us with the utmost distinctness. His favorite method is to use anecdotes to illustrate their prominent qualities. They follow one another, as in an old man's talk, securing their long literary life by means of the earnestness that went to their collection and utterance, and not at all to any attempt at literary grace. Who that reads Plutarch thinks of him as a Greek writer? He is a perfect cosmopolitan, at home everywhere and in every language. He has the right of citizenship in French, English, and German; he never impresses us as a translated Greek. And this position, in which he has no rival, he owes to the simplicity which is much rarer and nobler than literary art.



"I began the Lives," he said, "for the benefit of others, and I continue them for my own," and by pleasing himself, with absolute disregard of conventional laws, he has pleased whole generations of men. "For it does not necessarily follow," he says in the Life of Pericles, "that if a piece of work please for its gracefulness, therefore he that wrought it deserves our admiration. . . . But virtue, by the bare statement of its actions, can so affect men's minds as to create at once both admiration of the things done and desire to imitate them. . . . And so," he goes on, "we have thought fit to spend our time and pains in writing of the lives of famous persons."

Indeed, while every other way of regarding the world is subject to change, and literary fashions, political ideals, historical proportions, vary at different times, ethical laws remain as firmly fixed as physical laws, the eternal conditions of human existence; and Plutarch, by regarding them, while yet avoiding preaching, has won his place among the immortals.

The moral aim of his biographical work was doubtless clearer to himself and to his contemporaries than it is to us. The parallelism of the several Greek and Roman lives, with the final comparison between the members of each pair, was quite as important to him as anything else; and probably those to whom the question of the relative superiority of Greece or Rome was an open one found a delight which we do not share in weighing the newer against the older civilization and in reading Plutarch's thoughtful summing-up. He kept the former glory of Greece in honor, and paid the highest tribute possible to Rome by treating the two nations with equal respect. The difficulty of drawing the comparisons was great, and Plutarch has naturally not escaped the charge of partiality to his own countrymen, but he has escaped conviction by the disagreement of the jury. It would not be so easy to panel a new one, for we care less for the proportional merits of his heroes than for the humanity in each one, and perhaps we are free to admire him more than did the ancients, because we are not under the necessity of making up our minds on what is after all a side issue. It is only the abundance of human nature that gives books immortal life, and Plutarch's fame has grown with the approach of indifference to what he perhaps thought was the important part of his work. His greatest merit was in good part an unconscious one, as is often the case with the best books. At least, when we speak of Plutarch's Lives, we mean the biographical part, and not the weighing of two men in a balance: those pages we are apt to leave unread, like the moral of a fable.

What we do admire is the way in which the petty traits that he lovingly records illuminate the great ones, as they do in life. Not all gossip has this power, any more than long accumulation of details is realism in the composition of a novel. Everything depends on the

artist, and Plutarch gives us the air of the great men he writes about,—their nature—by his wise tact, just as a great painter can draw a striking likeness with two or three charcoal lines. He narrates trifles, but he does not narrate them trivially; he sees the men he writes about, and he puts them before us without any preconceived notion of what the dignity of the biographer's art demands; and the result is that one of the latest of the Greeks maintains the accustomed supremacy of his country by setting the standard of biography for future times.

### III.

Although Greece had in his time produced several persons of extraordinary worth, and much renowned for their achievements, such as Timotheus and Agesilaus and Pelopidas and (Timoleon's chief model) Epaminondas, yet the lustre of their best actions was obscured by a degree of violence and labor, insomuch that some of them were matter of blame and of repentance; whereas there is not any one act of Timoleon's, setting aside the necessity he was placed under in reference to his brother, to which, as Timæus observes, we may not fitly apply that exclamation of Sophocles:

O gods! what Venus, or what grace divine,  
Did here with human workmanship combine?

For as the poetry of Antimachus and the painting of Dionysius, the artists of Colophon, though full of force and vigor, yet appeared to be strained and elaborate in comparison with the pictures of Nicomachus and the verses of Homer, which, besides their general strength and beauty, have the peculiar charm of seeming to have been executed with perfect ease and readiness; so the expeditions and acts of Epaminondas or Agesilaus, that were full of toil and effort, when compared with the easy and natural as well as noble and glorious achievements of Timoleon, compel our fair and unbiassed judgment to pronounce the latter not indeed the effect of fortune, but the success of fortunate merit. Though he himself indeed ascribed that success to the sole favor of fortune; and both in the letters which he wrote to his friends at Corinth, and in the speeches he made to the people of Syracuse, he would say that he was thankful unto God, who, designing to save Sicily, was pleased to honor him with the name and title of the deliverance he vouchsafed it. And having built a chapel in his house, he there sacrificed to Good Hap, as a deity that had favored him, and devoted the house itself to the Sacred Genius; it being a house which the Syracusans had selected for him, as a special reward and monument of his brave exploits, granting him together with it the most agreeable and beautiful piece of land in the whole country, where he kept his residence for the most part, and enjoyed a private life with his wife and children, who came to him from Corinth. For he returned thither no more, unwilling to be concerned in the broils and tumults of Greece, or to expose himself to public envy (the fatal mischief which great commanders continually run into, from the insatiable appetite for honors and authority); but wisely chose to spend the remainder of his days in Sicily, and there partake of the blessings he himself had procured, the greatest of which was to



behold so many cities flourish, and so many thousands of people live happy through his means.

As, however, not only, as Simonides says, "on every lark must grow a crest," but also in every democracy there must spring up a false accuser; so was it at Syracuse: two of their popular spokesmen, Laphystius and Demænetus by name, fell to slander Timoleon. The former of whom requiring him to put in sureties that he would answer to an indictment that would be brought against him, Timoleon would not suffer the citizens, who were incensed at this demand, to oppose it or hinder the proceeding, since he of his own accord had been, he said, at all that trouble, and run so many dangerous risks for this very end and purpose, that every one who wished to try matters by law should freely have recourse to it. And when Demænetus, in full audience of the people, laid several things to his charge which had been done while he was general, he made no other reply to him, but only said he was much indebted to the gods for granting the request he had so often made them, namely, that he might live to see the Syracusans enjoy that liberty of speech which they now seemed to be masters of. Timoleon, therefore, having by confession of all done the greatest and the noblest things of any Greek of his age, and alone distinguished himself in those actions to which their orators and philosophers, in their harangues and panegyrics at their solemn national assemblies, used to exhort and incite the Greeks, and being withdrawn beforehand by happy fortune, unspotted and without blood, from the calamities of civil war, in which ancient Greece was soon after involved; having also given full proof, as of his sage conduct and manly courage to the barbarians and tyrants, so of his justice and gentleness to the Greeks, and his friends in general; having raised, too, the greater part of those trophies he won in battle, without any tears shed or any mourning worn by the citizens either of Syracuse or Corinth, and within less than eight years' space delivered Sicily from its inveterate grievances and intestine distempers, and given it up free to the native inhabitants, began, as he was now growing old, to find his eyes fail, and awhile after became perfectly blind. Not that he had done anything himself which might occasion this defect, or was deprived of his sight by any outrage of fortune; it seems rather to have been some inbred and hereditary weakness that was founded in natural causes, which by length of time came to discover itself. For it is said that several of his kindred and family were subject to the like gradual decay, and lost all use of their eyes, as he did, in their declining years. Athanis the historian tells us that even during the war against Hippo and Mamercus, while he was in camp at Mylæ, there appeared a white speck within his eye, from whence all could foresee the deprivation that was coming on him; this, however, did not hinder him then from continuing the siege and prosecuting the war till he got both tyrants into his power; but upon his coming back to Syracuse, he presently resigned the authority of sole commander, and besought the citizens to excuse him from any further service, since things were already brought to so fair an issue. Nor is it so much to be wondered that he himself should bear the misfortune without any marks of trouble; but the respect and gratitude which the Syracusans showed him when he was entirely blind may justly deserve our admiration. They used to go themselves to visit him in troops, and brought all the strangers that travelled through their country to his house and manor, that they also might have the pleasure to see their noble benefactor; making it the great matter of their joy and exultation that when, after so many brave and happy exploits, he might



have returned with triumph into Greece, he should disregard all the glorious preparations that were made to receive him, and choose rather to stay here and end his days among them. Of the various things decreed and done in honor of Timoleon, I consider one most signal testimony to have been the vote which they passed, that, whenever they should be at war with any foreign nation, they should make use of none but a Corinthian general. The method, also, of their proceeding in council, was a noble demonstration of the same deference for his person. For, determining matters of less consequence themselves, they always called him to advise in the more difficult cases, and such as were of greater moment. He was, on these occasions, carried through the market-place in a litter, and brought in, sitting, into the theatre, where the people with one voice saluted him by his name; and then, after returning the courtesy, and pausing for a time, till the noise of their gratulations and blessings began to cease, he heard the business in debate, and delivered his opinion. This being confirmed by a general suffrage, his servants went back with the litter through the midst of the assembly, the people waiting on him out with acclamations and applauses, and then returning to consider other public matters which they could despatch in his absence. Being thus cherished in his old age, with all the respect and tenderness due to a common father, he was seized with a very slight indisposition, which, however, was sufficient, with the aid of time, to put a period to his life. There was an allotment then of certain days given, within the space of which the Syracusans were to provide whatever should be necessary for his burial, and all the neighboring country people and strangers were to make their appearance in a body; so that the funeral pomp was set out with great splendor and magnificence in all other respects, and the bier, decked with ornaments and trophies, was borne by a select body of young men over that ground where the palace and castle of Dionysius stood before they were demolished by Timoleon. There attended on the solemnity several thousands of men and women, all crowned with flowers, and arrayed in fresh and clean attire, which make it look like the procession of a public festival; while the language of all, and their tears mingling with their praise and benediction of the dead Timoleon, manifestly showed that it was not any superficial honor or commanded homage which they paid him, but the testimony of a just sorrow for his death, and the expression of true affection. The bier at length being placed upon the pile of wood that was kindled to consume his corpse, Demetrius, one of their loudest criers, proceeded to read a proclamation, to the following purpose: "The people of Syracuse has made a special decree to inter Timoleon, the son of Timodemus, the Corinthian, at the common expense of two hundred minas, and to honor his memory forever, by the establishment of annual prizes to be competed for in music, and horse-races, and all sorts of bodily exercise; and this because he suppressed the tyrants, overthrew the barbarians, replenished the principal cities, that were desolate, with new inhabitants; and then restored the Sicilian Greeks to the privilege of living by their own laws." Besides this, they made a tomb for him in the market-place, which they afterwards built round with colonnades, and attached to it places of exercise for the young men, and gave to it the name of the Timoleonteum. And keeping to that form and order of civil policy and observing those laws and constitutions which he left them, they lived themselves a long time in great prosperity.

## IV.

Besides his *Lives*, Plutarch left many writings which are conveniently put together under the title of *Morals*. The subjects that he treats in these essays are manifold, and the essays themselves are not all of the same importance. Some appear to be notes of lectures in which trifles are discussed, others again are thoughtful dissertations on the most serious problems of life. Throughout, Plutarch's interest in moral questions is continually manifest, and there is nothing more charming than his attitude toward the world as it appears on almost every page. When we think of the condition of the ancient world at this time, as we shall find it pictured by Juvenal and other Roman writers, we are struck by Plutarch's innocence and simplicity; we seem to have found a writer of the Golden Age, not of literature, to be sure, but of morals. He seems wrapped up against the corruption that surrounded him in his knowledge of the past from which he continually draws lessons of uprightness and honesty. The old mythology is referred to by him as a storehouse of moral lessons; he brings instruction from all the philosophical systems, especially from his master, Plato; and he continually refers to the teachings to be drawn from the study of ancient history. So marked is the moral tendency of these writings that some have thought that Plutarch must have been a Christian in disguise, or at least have had knowledge of Christian writings. It is, however, an unfounded assumption; what is fairer is to see in his work one of the many bits of evidence that go to show the general moral reaction against the widespread corruption of the time. This feeling, which was one of the antecedent causes as well as a most powerful ally of Christianity, was evoked in the mind of every thoughtful man by the sight of the collapse of paganism, and the only hope for humanity seemed to lie in a reinforcement of the moral teachings of the past, whence a universal religion might be drawn by combining the various elements of truth from all available sources. And Plutarch only anticipated the early Fathers of the Church in the prominence he gave to Plato when they saw in Greek philosophy a revelation of divine truth. If for nothing else, the moral writings of Plutarch would be valuable as indications of the last struggles of paganism to raise itself to the highest level, and of the interest in ethical questions which could not fail to make the lessons of Christianity acceptable. They prove that there was a generally felt need of a loftier teaching, that the world was ready for the reception of a new code of morals. We shall find some of his Roman contemporaries bringing forward abundant evidence of the crying need of a new dispensation, but it is in these times that



those who escape the infection are most concerned about the state of affairs. This is natural—otherwise, to be sure, it would not happen—it is when our house is burning that we are most interested about the means of extinguishing fire.

The long study of ethical questions by the various schools of philosophy had differed as to the measures to be applied, but they had agreed in seeking a cure. Indeed, since the days of Socrates, philosophy had grown more ethical as the times grew worse, and the old religion faded out, and dejection and despair were the alternatives of indifference and recklessness. The old world was practically moribund.

Now, if truth be a ray of the divinity, as Plato says it is, and the source of all the good that derives upon either gods or men, then certainly the flatterer must be looked upon as a public enemy to all the gods, and especially to Apollo; for he always acts counter to that celebrated oracle of his, Know thyself, endeavoring to make every man his own cheat, by keeping him ignorant of the good and ill qualities that are in him; whereupon the good never arrive at perfection, and the ill grow incorrigible.

Did flattery, indeed, as most other misfortunes do, generally or altogether wait on the debauched and ignoble part of mankind, the mischief were of less consequence, and might admit of an easier prevention. But, as worms breed most in sweet and tender woods, so usually the most obliging, the most brave and generous tempers readiliest receive and longest entertain the flattering insect that hangs and grows upon them. And since, to use Simonides' expression, it is not for persons of a narrow fortune, but for gentlemen of estates, to keep a good stable of horses; so never saw we flattery the attendant of the poor, the inglorious and inconsiderable plebeian, but of the grandees of the world, the distemper and bane of great families and affairs, the plague in kings' chambers, and the ruin of their kingdoms. Therefore it is a business of no small importance, and one which requires no ordinary circumspection, so to be able to know a flatterer in every shape he assumes, that the counterfeit resemblance some time or other bring not true friendship itself into suspicion and disrepute. For parasites—like lice, which desert a dying man, whose palled and vapid blood can feed them no longer—never intermix in dry and insipid business where there is nothing to be got; but prey upon a noble quarry, the ministers of state and potentates of the earth, and afterwards lousily shirk off if the greatness of their fortune chance to leave them. But it will not be wisdom in us to stay till such fatal junctures, and then try the experiment, which will not only be useless, but dangerous and hurtful; for it is a deplorable thing for a man to find himself then destitute of friends when he most wants them and has no opportunity either of exchanging his false and faithless friend for a fast and honest one. And therefore we should rather try our friend, as we do our money, whether or not he be passable and current, before we need him. For it is not enough to discover the cheat to our cost, but we must so understand the flatterer, that he put no cheat upon us; otherwise we should act like those who must needs take poison to know its strength, and foolishly hazard their lives to inform their judgment. And as we cannot approve of this carelessness, so neither can we of that too scrupulous humor of those who, taking the measures



of true friendship only from the bare honesty and usefulness of the man, immediately suspect a pleasant and easy conversation for a cheat. For a friend is not a dull tasteless thing, nor does the decorum of friendship consist in sourness and austerity of temper, but its very port and gravity is soft and amiable,—

Where Love and all the Graces do reside.  
For it is not only a comfort to the afflicted,  
To enjoy the courtesy of his kindest friend,

as Euripides speaks ; but friendship extends itself to both fortunes, as well brightens and adorns prosperity as allays the sorrows that attend adversity. And as Evenus used to say that fire makes the best sauce, so friendship, wherewith God has seasoned the circumstances of our mortality, gives a relish to every condition, renders them all easy, sweet, and agreeable enough. And indeed, did not the laws of friendship admit of a little pleasantry and good humor, why should the parasite insinuate himself under that disguise? And yet he, as counterfeit gold imitates the brightness and lustre of the true, always puts on the easiness and freedom of a friend, is always pleasant and obliging, and ready to comply with the humor of his company. And therefore it is no way reasonable either, to look upon every just character that is given us as a piece of flattery ; for certainly a due and seasonable commendation is as much the duty of one friend to another as a pertinent and serious reprehension ; nay, indeed, a sour querulous temper is perfectly repugnant to the laws of friendship and conversation ; whereas a man takes a chiding patiently from a friend who is as ready to praise his virtues as to animadvert upon his vices, willingly persuading himself that mere necessity obliged him to reprimand, whom kindness had first moved to commend.

But what is at length in death, that is so grievous and troublesome? For I know not how it comes to pass that, when it is so familiar and as it were related to us, it should seem so terrible. How can it be rational to wonder if that cleaves asunder which is divisible, if that melts whose nature is liquefaction, if that burns which is combustible, and so, by a parity of reason, if that perisheth which by nature is perishable ! For when is it that death is not in us ! For, as Heraclitus saith, it is the same thing to be dead and alive, asleep and awake, a young man and decrepit ; for these alternately are changed one into another. For as a potter can form the shape of an animal out of his clay and then as easily deface it, and can repeat this backwards and forwards as often as he pleaseth, so Nature too out of the same materials fashioned first our grandfathers, next our fathers, then us, and in process of time will engender others, and again others upon these. For as the flood of our generation glides on without any intermission and will never stop, so in the other direction the stream of our corruption flows eternally on, whether it be called Acheron or Cocytus by the poets. So that the same cause which first showed us the light of the sun carries us down to infernal darkness. And in my mind, the air which encompasseth us seems to be a lively image of the thing ; for it brings on the vicissitudes of night and day, life and death, sleeping and waking. For this cause it is that life is called a fatal debt, which our fathers contracted and we are bound to pay ; which is to be done calmly and without any complaint, when the creditor demands it ; and by this means we shall show ourselves men of sedate passions. And I believe Nature, knowing the confusion and shortness of our life, hath industriously concealed the end of it from us, this making for our advantage. For if we

were sensible of it beforehand, some would pine away with untimely sorrow, and would die before their death came. For she saw the woes of this life, and with what a torrent of cares it is overflowed—which if thou didst undertake to number, thou wouldst grow angry with it, and confirm that opinion which hath a vogue amongst some, that death is more desirable than life.

And did we in like manner but take an impartial survey of those troubles, lapses, and infirmities incident to our nature, we should find we stood in no need of a friend to praise and extol our virtues, but of one rather that would chide and reprimand us for our vices. For first, there are but few who will venture to deal thus roundly and impartially with their friends, and fewer yet who know the art of it, men generally mistaking railing and ill language for a decent and friendly reproof. And then a chiding, like any other physic, if ill-timed, racks and torments you to no purpose, and works in a manner the same effect with pain that flattery does with pleasure. For an unseasonable reprehension may be equally mischievous with an unseasonable commendation, and force your friend to throw himself upon the flatterer; like water which, leaving the too precipitous and rugged hills, rolls down upon the humble valleys below. And therefore we ought to qualify and allay the sharpness of our reproofs with a due temper of candor and moderation,—as we would soften light which is too powerful for a distempered eye,—lest our friends, being plagued and ranted upon every trivial occasion, should at last fly to the flatterer's shade for their ease and quiet. For all vice, Philopappus, is to be corrected by an intermediate virtue, and not by its contrary extreme, as some do who, to shake off that sheepish bashfulness which hangs upon their natures, learn to be impudent; to lay aside their country breeding, endeavor to be comical; to avoid the imputation of softness and cowardice, turn bullies; out of an abhorrence of superstition, commence atheists; and rather than be reputed fools, play the knave; forcing their inclinations, like a crooked stick, to the opposite extreme, for want of skill to set them straight. But it is highly rude to endeavor to avoid the suspicion of flattery by only being insignificantly troublesome, and it argues an ungenteel, unconvertible temper in a man to show his just abhorrence of mean and servile ends in his friendship only by a sour and disagreeable behavior; like the freedman in the comedy, who would needs persuade himself that his railing accusation fell within the limits of that freedom in discourse which every one had right to with his equals. Since, therefore, it is absurd to incur the suspicion of a flatterer by an over-obliging and obsequious humor, and as absurd, on the other hand, in endeavoring to decline it by an immoderate latitude in our apprehensions, to lose the enjoyments and salutary admonitions of a friendly conversation, and since the measures of what is just and proper in this, as in other things, are to be taken from decency and moderation; the nature of the argument seems to require me to conclude it with a discourse upon this subject.



## CHAPTER V.—LUCIAN.

I.—Lucian, the Satirist. The First of the Moderns. More Greek than the Greeks of his Time. His Life. II.—His Onslaughts upon the Moribund Religion. His Dialogues. III.—The Broad Burlesque which he sometimes Employs against Gods, Philosophers, and Men of Letters. IV.—His Later Fame. His Notion of Hades. His Treatment of Gross Superstitions. Alexander the Medium. Various Writings of his. V.—His Wit, Comparison between it and the Same Quality as Exhibited by Others. His Denunciation of Science. His Exhibition of the General Condition of the Greek Man of Letters in those Times.

### I.

WHILE Plutarch thus presents us a picture of what was best in the old religion and early society, and drew from them lessons that should counteract the corruption of his day, Lucian, on the other hand, broke with the past, derided its religion, scorned its philosophy, denounced his contemporaries as well, with no occult purpose of favoring any sect, but merely to show the age its own rottenness. Plutarch fought wrongdoing with good advice and good examples from early history: Lucian's weapons were ridicule and satire. Plutarch has been well called the last of the ancients, and Lucian the first of the moderns. Yet, true as this statement is, Lucian still shows many of the qualities of an ancient in the artistic completeness of his work, the lightness and certainty of his touch, and in his freedom from deep imprecations. He says what he has to say without sullen wrath, and, having said it, he stops.

Lucian's possession of this classic quality is the more striking in view of the fact that he was not a Greek. He was born at Samorata, near Antioch, at an uncertain date in the second century of our era, 120 A.D., or 140 A.D., and, like Socrates, began to prepare himself to be a sculptor. But, if we may believe the account that he gives in one of his writings, he broke the piece of marble on which he was at work, an accident for which he was promptly punished, and in a dream Science appeared to him, exhibiting to him the rewards that awaited the successful sophist, and these persuaded him to devote himself to this profession. He studied at home, and practiced for some time at Antioch; then he traveled, like the itinerant lecturers of the present day, through foreign lands, declaiming and writing his own compositions. He appears to have passed through Asia Minor, Greece,



and Gaul, and everywhere to have been successful. His audiences demanded of these wandering sophists the slightest intellectual food. Just as now, in these days of science, diluted information of familiar facts, with a number of photographic views, gives delight for an hour, so then literary jugglery was deemed a fascinating amusement, and audiences applauded mock praise of a fly, and similarly ingenious parodies. Lucian after leaving Gaul, which was a most fruitful territory for those who lived by this exercise of their wits, visited Rome, and finally, when about forty years old, returned to Greece and established himself at Athens. Then he determined to abandon an occupation which had probably brought him a competence as well as supplied him with abundant material for satire, and from this time he devoted himself to literature. Later, when an old man, he was reduced to poverty and compelled to fill a minor office in an Egyptian court of law. He died at an advanced age.

## II.

The cleverest of Lucian's satires are those directed against the moribund mythology. He lived in a period of gross superstition, when paganism had revived for a last struggle against decay, and the old traditions joined hands with all sorts of novel extravagances. Lucian set his face against both. His attack upon the old Greek mythology was especially ingenious. He wrote a number of short dialogues in which the absurdities of the old beliefs were exposed without passion, but merely as obvious facts that possibly had been overlooked, though when once stated they could not be denied. The poets had drawn pictures of greater or less length for centuries from the abundant legendary history, and he might have defended himself from attack by appealing to these familiar precedents. Writing them in prose could not certainly be regarded as blasphemy, and even serious persons who might have been pained would have found it hard to put their finger on the offensive passages. This is, after all the secret of his power; he puts things before his readers exactly as they were recorded, and if his statement is destructive, it is because the facts are unworthy of admiration. Lucian simply records the myth; his irony is concealed, and the sting of the attack lies in the absurdities that poets have long hidden under a cloud of fine language. As to the form that he chose, he explains it as a combination devised by himself, of comedy and dialogue. Comedy, he says, was wholly devoted to the services of Dionysus, it used to march to the sound of the flute, and ridiculed the friends of the dialogue, calling them dreamers, chasers of wild geese, etc., with no other aim than amusement and

denunciation. Thus, as in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, it represented them floating in the air, or carefully measuring the leap of a flea, to signify that the philosophers lived in the clouds. Dialogue was employed solely for grave discussion, and philosophical controversies on nature and virtue, so that between dialogue and comedy there existed complete discord. He, however, had ventured to combine the two, although there seems to be no common ground between them. As to stealing, there is none, he boasts in his works. "From whom could I steal?" he asks.

It will be noticed however, that while he invented this new form, he is so far from being a creator, that he merely combined two forms already existing.

Here is an example of this part of his work:

ALEXANDER *and* DIOGENES.



DIOGENES.

DIOGENES. How is this, Alexander? So you were forced to die as well as the rest of us!

ALEX. As you see, Diogenes. Is it anything so extraordinary that a mortal should die!

DIOG. Ammon, then, was only passing a joke upon us when he declared you his son, while you were only the son of Philip?

ALEX. Undoubtedly; I should scarce have died if Ammon had been my father.

DIOG. Yet in support of this pretence a tale was spread that your mother Olympias had a mysterious intercourse with a dragon, that the dragon was seen in her bed, that you were the fruit of it, and that Philip was erroneously reputed to be your father.

ALEX. These reports did reach my ears as they did yours; but I perceive now that of all that was said of my mother and the priest of Ammon not a word was true.

DIOG. Their lies, however, were of great service to you in your enterprises; for many submitted to you merely because they took you for a god.—But tell me, who succeeds you in that prodigious empire which cost you so much trouble?

ALEX. I cannot tell, my good Diogenes; I had made no dispositions about it, except that when at the last gasp I gave my seal-ring to Perdicas.—What makes you laugh, Diogenes?

DIOG. What should make me laugh, but that, while I behold you thus, I remember all the fooleries acted by our Greeks, to please you; how they flattered you from your first acceding to the government, chose you their



commander in chief against the barbarians, some even associated you with the twelve great deities, and built temples, and offered sacrifice to the supposed son of the dragon. But, with permission, where did the Macedonians bury you?

ALEX. This is the third day that I have been lying in state at Babylon. In the mean time, Ptolemy, the captain of my satellites, has promised, as soon as the present disturbances will afford him leisure, to convey me to Ægypt, and inter me there, in order to procure me a place among the Ægyptian deities.

DIOG. And I shall not laugh, Alexander, when I see you, even in the kingdom of the dead, still so silly as to wish to be an Anubis or Osiris! But soothe yourself with no such expectations, my divine sir! He that has once crossed our lake, and entered within the mouth of Tartarus, cannot return. Æacus takes too much care, and there is no joking with Cerberus. But are you not greatly surprised, when you look round you and perceive what all is come to, the satellites and satraps, and all the treasures and the kneeling nations, and the great Babylon and Bactria, together with all the elephants?—and the high triumphal car on which you shone and were gazed at as a meteor! and the regal diadem on the head, and the purple flowing down in ample folds, when you think upon the glorious life and the majesty and the fame which you were forced to leave behind you! That may well cause you to lament!—Why do you weep, silly man! Did not your wise Aristotle teach you how unsubstantial all those gifts of fortune are?

ALEX. Oh, that wise man, as you call him, was the vilest of all my flatterers! Let me alone to say what Aristotle was! For I best know how much he was perpetually desiring to have of me, what letters he wrote to me, how he abused my vain-glorious thirst of knowledge, how he was always complimenting me, and now praised me for my beauty (as if that too was in the number of real goods), now on account of my exploits and my riches: for even riches he pronounced to be a real good, to palliate the ignominy of his accepting so much from me. My good Diogenes, the fellow was a charlatan, who knew how to act his part in a masterly manner, no sage! All the benefit I reap from his wisdom is that I now bewail the loss of those things which you have enumerated, because he taught me to regard them as the greatest blessings.

DIOG. Do you know what? Since we have no hellebore growing here, I will prescribe another remedy for your grief. Repair to Lethe, and swallow some copious draughts of its waters, that will infallibly render you insensible to the loss of the Aristotelian goods.—But are not those Clitus and Calesthenes, whom I see, with some others hurrying towards you with such fury as if they would enforce the law of retaliation against you, and tear you to pieces in return for the injuries they formerly suffered from you? Strike therefore into this other road to Lethe, and, as I said, drink till these phantasies leave you.

#### MENIPPUS and MERCURY.

MENIPPUS. Where, then, are those beautiful men and women of whom there was so much talk above, Mercury? Be so good as to conduct me to them, as I am quite a new-comer and know not how to find my way about.

MERCURY. I have not time for it, dear Menippus: look, however, yonder; rather more to the right: there are Hyacinthus and Narcissus, and Nireus,



and Achilles, and Tyro, and Helena, and Leda, in short all the celebrated beauties of antiquity, all together in a cluster.

MENIPPUS. I see nothing but bare bones and skulls, in which nothing is to be discriminated.

MERCURY. Yet these bones, which appear to you so contemptible, have been extolled by the poets to this day.

MENIPPUS. But show me at least Helen ; for of myself I cannot find her out.

MERCURY. That skull there is the beautiful Helen.

MENIPPUS. That, then, was the cause that all Greece was stowed together in a thousand ships, that so many Greeks and barbarians were slain, and so many cities razed to the ground ?

MERCURY. My good Menippus, you should have seen her when alive ! You would for certain (as well as the old counsellors of Priam in the *Iliad*) have confessed that Nemesis herself could not take it amiss—

if such celestial charms  
For nine long years should set the world in arms.

He that looks upon a withered flower can indeed not discover how beautiful it was while standing in full bloom and brilliant in its natural dyes.



CHARON.

MENIPPUS. What I wonder at, Mercury, is how it came to pass that the Greeks did not perceive that it was for the sake of such a transitory and evanescent object that they gave themselves all that trouble.

MERCURY. I have no time to philosophize with you, Menippus ; look thou therefore for a place where you choose to lodge. I must go and fetch over the rest of the dead.

### III.

These simple dialogues are not the only ones of the sort. Others, in which the burlesque is more prominent, are included among Lucian's works ; in one, Jupiter is confronted by a sophist who makes short

work of the king of the gods when he has a chance to cross-examine him about the absolute power possessed by the Fates ; and in another there is a long discussion in Olympus about the insolence of a philosopher who has ventured to assert that the gods do not exist. Zeus is furious over the suggestion ; he splutters and storms, imitating one of the prologues of Euripides, while Athene uses Homeric language, as he bids the gods to assemble in order to discuss the affair. Then there is commotion in Olympus over questions of precedence. Most of the new foreign deities are made out of gold, and so the old Greek divinities, being represented in less costly marble, have to take the back-seats. Poseidon—or Neptune in his Roman name—for example, loses his temper because the Egyptian deity, the dog-faced Anubis, was given a more honorable place than himself ; but finally Zeus explains the state of affairs to the assembled gods. He tells them that Damis, the sophist who denies the existence of the gods, has the sympathy of the crowd who listened to him, but that they are waiting to hear what his antagonist Timocles shall say before coming to a final decision. The different deities suggest various courses ; Poseidon proposes that Damis be killed by a thunderbolt ; Heracles proposes to enter the hall and pull down the roof on his blasphemous head ; Apollo tries to foretell the result of the discussion by a most ambiguous oracle, but nothing is decided on. Suddenly the scene changes to the scene of the debate, and Timocles tries to prove the existence of the gods. His task is a difficult one, however, and when he adduces the general consent of mankind, the order of the universe, the impossibility that things could go on as they do without a pilot, Damis meets him, until finally Timocles loses his temper and bursts out in stormy abuse of his opponent, who runs away laughing. Zeus is much pained at the discomfiture of his advocate, but Hermes comforts him by pointing out that he still has the majority on his side : most of the Greeks, the wild rabble, and all the barbarians.

“ True,” answers Zeus, “ but I had rather have a single champion like Damis than be the ruler over ten thousand Babylons.”

Again in the council of the gods there is a somewhat similar scene when Momus appeals to Greece against the admission of a crowd of foreign deities to Olympus, the upshot of which is that Zeus publishes an edict stating in the preamble that the number of the gods had grown inconveniently large, so that their meetings were tumultuous assemblages in which a thousand incomprehensible jargons were spoken, and that the supply of nectar and ambrosia threatened to run short, the price having already risen, and that the intruders kept

thrusting themselves into the best seats; therefore be it ordered that steps be taken to decide who have proper claims to their places, etc.

If the gods fare ill at the hands of this merciless satirist, the philosophers, even those whom he seemed to be aiding, could not congratulate themselves on escaping his notice. In one dialogue, the *Sale of the Philosophers*, he lets eminent representatives of each sect announce their various qualifications and then be sold by auction, most of them for some trifling sum. Socrates, however, fetches a good round price, two talents, about two thousand dollars, Diogenes only six cents. Pyrrho, the Sceptic, is unable to determine whether he is sold or not. In a sort of sequel Lucian represents himself fleeing for his life from the enraged philosophers, who have managed to escape from Hades for a single day in order to avenge themselves. Lucian is brought up for judgment before Philosophy itself, and in answer to a question about his profession asserts that he is a hater of bragging, humbug, lying, pride, and the whole breed of men infected with these vices.

"By Hercules," says Philosophy, "that's a business that exposes you to a good deal of hatred." Lucian goes on: "I love, on the other hand, truth, honesty, simplicity, and everything that is kindly, but I find very few with whom I can exercise this talent. Indeed, there are more than fifty thousand in the other camp, so that my affection runs the risk of perishing for lack of practice."

This statement may be fairly taken as a just explanation of Lucian's position as a satirist, and it agrees very well with his impartiality and apparent lack of any other object than the desire to attack the special cause of wrath then before him. He does not appear as an advocate against religion when he laughs at the possible grotesqueness of the popular beliefs, and in this very dialogue he discriminates between the absurdities of individual philosophers and philosophy itself.

"Some of them," he says, "follow the precepts of philosophy and observe its laws, and far be it from me to say anything wounding or insulting about them!"

This distinction is one more often made by those who are criticising satirical writing than by satirists themselves, who are apt to see nothing but harm in the objects of their wrath. Lucian held a brief for general sanity, rather than one against any particular foible or folly of society. He was a Greek, by nature if not by birth, and shunned exaggeration, whereas the Roman satirists who set the fashion for modern times worked themselves into a rage in order to make their assault impressive. There is a rolling accompaniment of melodra-



matic thunder in their work which Lucian never employed ; they attack everything in a sort of blind fury, while he dexterously inserts his rapier into vital spots with an easy grace and an air of quiet composure that the Roman satirists did not know. This self-possession, apparent even in the excitement of conflict, is still more marked in his choice of the objects to be condemned, for he was not a mere sneerer at everything, but rather a man who detested a charlatan because he loved an honest man, and he knew how to admire as well as to dislike ; and this ability to see both sides, which is generally the exclusive privilege of posterity, made his work effective at the time and has kept it fresh and admirable ever since. The same fair-mindedness that he showed in his treatment of philosophy may be seen in his discussion of literary subjects, as, for example, in the essay on the proper way to write history. There he makes easy fun of the efforts of various contemporary writers to imitate Thucydides and Herodotus, and gives convincing proofs of their incompetence ; but this is not all : he goes on to show how history should be written, with what pains the facts were to be gathered, arranged, and described. In the account of *Demonax*, that is included, though with grave doubts of its authenticity, among his works, we may see again that the capacity for seeing faults did not mar its author's appreciation of a fine character. Lucian was not a mere destroyer, for whom nothing was good enough ; he also constructed models to replace those which he destroyed. Thus, in this brief account of his dead friend, if we may accept its genuineness, he says that he undertakes the task in order to make him live, so far as possible, in the memory of virtuous men, and further in order that young students of philosophy may not be compelled to look back to antiquity for models, but may follow in the footsteps of a philosopher of their own time. Then he goes on to narrate a number of instances of the wit and wisdom of *Demonax*.

#### IV.

If the direct influence of Lucian on literature and philosophy was slight, we may yet find much in his writings that not only secured for this bold scoffer toleration during the Middle Ages,—when he was read although with disapproval, as the harsh comments on the manuscripts show,—but also affected the literature of that time. To the early Christians his denunciations of the old mythology and his proofs of insufficiency of philosophy must have been welcome support from an unexpected ally, and it is easy to imagine with what delight they would have read the opening of the *Timon*, when the misanthropist taunts the King of the Gods with his incompetence :

"O Zeus, protector of friendship, god of hosts, of friends, of the hearth-stone, of lightning, of oaths, clouds, thunder, or whatever may be the name under which thou art invoked by the wild brain of poets, especially when they are in a boggle with the metre, for then they give thee all sorts of names to hide the confusion of the sense and the lapses of the rhythm; what has become of the flash of your lightning, and the long roar of your thunder? All that must be sheer nonsense, a poetic fiction, a mere clatter of words. And as for the boasted thunderbolts which thou hast always kept in thy hand, they must have gone out and have lost the faintest spark of wrath with evil-doers. . . . Thou liest asleep, as if drugged, so that thou dost not overhear perjurers or see men doing injustice; thy sight is dimmed, so thou seest not human actions, and thou art become hard of hearing."

The whole of the dramatic sketch, for so much it really is, will be found interesting; it presents a picture not merely of a decayed Olympus where Zeus is doing his best to keep up the old state, and bids Hermes to order Cyclops to put a new point on his thunderbolts, but also of the society of Lucian's—indeed of all—time, when wealth has proved a magnet for flattery. The piece is one of the fullest of suggestion and moral instruction that Lucian ever wrote. But at this moment it may be worth while merely to mention one of its qualities, even if it be one of the least important, namely, the prominence given to personifications in the dialogue, where Wealth and Poverty appear, act, and speak like human beings, reaching back to the Plutus of Aristophanes on one hand and to the Middle Ages on the other. Not even in the Middle Ages, however, did such abstractions more nearly exist than here. And other analogies are to be found: some of the most vivid of the pictures that Lucian draws are those of scenes in the lower world, when the souls of men make their appearance before the infernal powers and are judged with hopeless severity. The scenes in the *Menippus*, for example, could hardly be made more terrible by even the mediæval imagination, fed as it was on visions of horror, and it is but a short step from the conceptions of this pagan to Dante's *Inferno*. Thus, in the place where evil-doers are punished, Lucian saw and heard, as he says,—

"only terrible things: the noise of whips, wheels, fetters, and racks; the lamentations of those who are consumed by the flames. Chimæra rends them; Cerberus devours them; all are punished together, kings, slaves, satraps, poor, rich, beggars, all are repenting their sins. We recognized a few of these evil ones who had recently died; but they tried to hide, and turned away, or, if they did look at us, it was with a servile and flattering expression. And yet these were the men who alive had been full of haughtiness and contempt."

Lucian by no means invented this list of horrors, for information about the lower regions had been steadily growing more precise



throughout antiquity, as we may see by comparing Virgil's picture of a retributive Hades with the pallid corner of the universe through which Odysseus passed many centuries before, yet nowhere do we find a more graphic statement of it than here, or one which came nearer the mediæval visions. Another touch which Lucian supplies is this; that the dead are mere skeletons, as they figure in the modern conceptions; this we find in the same Menippus, in the first of the Dialogues of the Dead, where Diogenes bids Pollux to tell the sturdy athletes that in the other world there is no glow of health or strength, nothing but dust, a mass of unbeautiful skulls, and far more vividly in the piece called the Catapulus, or Ferrying Over, which describes the passage across the Styx in Charon's bark with all the vividness of Bunyan. It is a Greek Dance of Death that Lucian puts before us: the philosopher Cyniscus complains that he has been forgotten so long; Megapenthes, the tyrant, on the other hand, asks to be allowed to return for a moment to finish his half-built palace, to tell his wife what is to be her share of the property, to conquer his enemies. He offers to give bonds for his speedy return. More solemn is his conviction of infamous sins and his condemnation to the eternal memory of his wicked life, for he alone is not allowed to drink of Lethe, which wipes out the memory of the past.

In another sketch we find Charon coming forth from Hades to see what sort of a place this world is which the dead always lament to leave. Hermes serves as his guide, and Charon has a good opportunity to see men with their petty passions, vain ambitions, futile hopes. As Hermes says:

"What would a man do, if, when he begins to build a house and hurries the workmen, he should learn that when the roof was scarcely raised, he was to leave it for his heirs and would not have the satisfaction of eating a single meal there? Another is glad because his wife has presented him with a son; he invites his friends to a supper; he names his boy after his brother: if he knew that the child would die at the age of seven, do you think he would rejoice much at his birth? He is happy because he sees the delight of the father of a victor in the Olympic games; but his neighbor, who is following his son to the grave, does not see him and does not think how slight is his hold upon his own boy. See the quarrels of men to enlarge their estates, to heap up riches; then before they have begun to enjoy them, they are summoned away."

To this Charon makes answer:

"When I see all that, I fail to understand what charm men find in life, and why they lament to leave it. If one considers kings, who pass for the most fortunate of mortals, one sees that besides the instability and uncertainty of their state, they are subject to more pain than pleasure, forever exposed to fear, trouble, hatred, plots, resentment, flattery. I say nothing



of mourning, illness, sufferings, which are the common lot of all. Judge from their miseries what must be those of simple citizens.

"Shall I tell you, Hermes, to what I liken men and their lives? You have seen foam-covered bubbles floating below a waterfall; some, the lightest, burst almost as soon as they are formed, others are longer-lived, and increase in bulk by absorbing others that swell them up beyond measure, but soon even they burst, for they cannot escape their fate. Such is the life of man. All are puffed up with a little breath; some more, some less; these perish speedily, their breath lasts but a moment; the others perish when gathering new force, but all burst at last."

Passages like these, and that in the *Sacrifices*, when he laughs at the stories told about the gods of the ancients, show how ripe the world was for a new dispensation, how great was the moral bent that some of the philosophers had given to men's thoughts.

Before closing, it is important to speak of Lucian's descriptions of society, as in a passage where he portrays the humiliations endured by a philosopher in the house of a patron, and in his account of the so-called magicians who lived upon the credulity and folly of men. Thus one of them—Alexander by name—used to receive written questions from the faithful, who would seal them carefully before handing them in; Alexander, however, managed to find out what the notes contained, and would give wise answers. Something of the same kind has been reported on similar authority in these later times. Lucian exposed the charlatan's tricks, but with no more success than usually attends the pricking of such bubbles. The whole story of this charlatan's career is most interesting and instructive reading, as an example of the curious working of superstition at this period when the old religion was breaking up and Christianity was commonly regarded as a sort of atheism. Alexander was born about 102 of our era, under the reign of Trajan, and died about 172, when Marcus Aurelius was emperor. No student can afford to overlook this brilliant picture of what we may call the desperation of paganism that is drawn here. While the more educated classes, in the wreck of the old religion, turned to the lessons of philosophy for spiritual guidance and consolation, following the teaching of the leading schools that almost without exception turned from the contemplation of abstract questions to the study of life, the lower classes, on the other hand, as they broke from the old tenets of their faith, welcomed foreign deities and novel rites in place of the proved insufficiency of the old faith. Indeed, part of the success of Christianity may well be ascribed to this hospitality to new ideas. They adopted new divinities by right of conquest, and all manner of oriental gods and superstitions found a new home throughout the Roman empire, and it was among this motley band that Alexander established himself with wonderful success. By the device of burying

tablets in the ground, soon to be exhumed, to announce the arrival of a divine being, a plan that, slightly modified, has succeeded in this country within the last half-century, he was at once accepted by men who took a great deal of local pride in this manifestation of divine preference. Alexander played his game with vast profit to himself and his confederates. To the god whom he brought in the guise of a serpent, he gave the name of Glycon and declared it a descendant of Aesculapius; his money he earned by the utterance of oracles and by answering the questions contained in sealed notes. These he opened after the fashion still followed by swindlers, and when this was impossible he gave replies that might mean anything. How successful he was is shown by Lucian's account of him, and it is further attested by the discovery in modern times of three inscriptions,—one in Macedonia and two at Carlsburg in Transylvania,—in which divine honors are offered to Glycon. Coins bearing the same name have also been found. The whole story cannot be recounted here, but it is well worth reading for the light it throws on the condition of the time.

In Lucian's account of the death of Peregrinus, a Cynic philosopher, we may see his repugnance to the Cynics,—a repugnance that he felt, it is true, for all systems of philosophy, except his own Epicureanism, and for scientific teaching as well. Doubt was his strongest feeling. This essay is also of interest as showing the contempt that was felt by a well-educated pagan for the early Christians.

In his *True History* Lucian wrote the first of the long line of impossible adventures that have since become famous, an account of grotesque travels, like those of Munchausen, Gulliver, etc. But to go through the whole list of his various writings is impossible; enough have been mentioned to show their variety and the general tendency of his brilliant work.

## V.

Enough, too, has been quoted to illustrate his wit, a quality so rare that if we look at the whole literature of the world we shall find that those who really possessed it may be readily counted on our fingers. Even wisdom by its side is as common as it is commonplace; and besides Aristophanes, Lucian, Erasmus, Voltaire, and Heine, it would be hard to name any one who would not be exalted by a place in the second rank alongside of Cervantes and Molière. However the list may be made out, it is certainly worthy of note that there are no applications for admission to it, except Rabelais, between Lucian and Erasmus, and that in that lapse of time the use of the rapier was as obsolete in controversy as is now that of the cross-bow in war. Indeed,



not until Voltaire did the world see such keen thrusts and so fatal stabs inflicted without a bruise or portentous letting of blood. The Roman clubbed his adversary; and in the Middle Ages wit was something unholy. Even Erasmus was at times tongue-tied by authority; Voltaire, more than any one, reminds us of Lucian, as a master, not of verbal fence, but of verbal offense, and, more than that, of a fatal venom. In Lucian's case this dangerous gift was applied impartially to all society, but with a consummate grace free from apparent malevolence. He has more than almost any writer the quality that is rare at every period and peculiar to none, the indefinable charm of a man of the world. Perhaps the fact that he had nothing to prove only intensifies the impression. In old days, to be sure, he was denounced for not recognizing the truth of Christianity; indeed, as was said above, he does not distinguish between them and heretics; but at the present time one of the severest charges brought against him is that in the *Hermotinus* he spoke disrespectfully of geometry:

"It points absurd axioms, it asks you to imagine things without existence, invisible points, lines without breadth, and the like; then it constructs on these unsubstantial foundations a building just like them, and so pretends to demonstrate the truth, while starting from falsehood;"

and similarly girds at astronomers in the *Ikaromenippos*;

"Their sight is no better than ours; most of them are half blind from old age or weakness, and yet they boast that they can have distinct vision of the limits of the heavens; they measure the sun, penetrate the region beyond the moon, and describe the size and shape of the stars. They cannot tell you the distance from Megara to Athens, but they know just how far the sun is from the moon; they measure the height of the atmosphere, the depths of the ocean, the circumference of the earth, trace circles, draw triangles in squares, with any number of spheres, and actually presume to measure the heavens themselves!"

Others, again, lament the unsatisfactoriness of his treatise on the proper way of writing history. He is said to utter only commonplaces, but unfortunately good advice is always commonplace.

Moreover, what we have left of his productions, and the supply is not a scanty one, has a greater importance than that of attesting his wit and intelligence, in showing us the general condition of the minds of his contemporaries. Not only, as Gibbon has said (vol. i., cap. ii.) can we be sure "that a writer conversant with the world would never have ventured to expose the gods of his country to public ridicule, had they not already been the objects of secret contempt among the polished and enlightened orders of society,"—for not only would Lucian have never ventured to publish them, but they would not have



entered into his mind—but we may also gather much useful information on the extremely interesting period in which he lived. The most striking fact of this age is the new prominence of the Greeks and the way in which their intellectual acuteness conquered the swiftly decaying Romans. The influence of the Greek men of letters—for by that phrase we may understand rhetoricians, sophists, and grammarians—was enormous. It spread far into the East, for in Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, we find him talking in Greek to an Indian king who amuses himself with listening to recitations from Greek poets, although this is the last book in the world to use as an authority; but we also know from other sources—what is in itself only credible—that Greek rhetoricians made their way into Asia along with the armies of Alexander the Great. Their greatest influence was, however, in Rome and throughout the whole vast Roman empire, which offered a vast field for the Greeks with their older and riper culture. The rhetoricians and sophists were the



APOLLONIUS OF TYANA.

teachers of Rome; all the young men received their instructions from these sole representatives of a higher civilization, in whose hands alone lay the care of all intellectual matters. The whole tone of Roman literature makes clear the wide-spread dependence on later Greek models; the interest of the Roman emperors in these teachers was most active: Hadrian and the Antonines supported them with the weight of their authority; they gave the philosophers high positions, appointed them tutors to their sons, listened to their debates and lectures, sought their society. Under this powerful encouragement the tone of the Greek teachings improved, and the consciousness of their intellectual superiority to the Romans who ruled the world aroused their patriotism and ambition. It is curious to notice their indifference to the work of the Roman writers. Only once or twice had Plutarch quoted any Latin author, and Lucian is equally contemptuous, while both praise not only Greece, but especially Athens, the brain of Greece. With the decay of the vast power of Rome, the self-satisfaction of the Greeks could only grow stronger, and their efforts to maintain their pre-eminence were many and interesting. To speak of literature alone, we find countless fanciful discussions on trivial themes; thus Lucian's eulogy of the fly is an example of the futile exercise of intelligence common at periods of general apathy, such as we see among the later writers of the Italian Renaissance, and possibly in some of the modern

verse-making of English bards who make very clear the schism between life and literary cleverness. Imaginary questions were put up for discussion, such as the feelings of Hector on learning that Priam had sat at the table of Achilles, and similar hypothetical problems wherein everything depended on the ingenuity of the speaker. Confused ethical questions had to be settled by the ready tongues and quick wits of those practiced debaters.

Nor is it in prose alone that we find instances of this semi-dramatic toying with the subjects of the older literature: in the Anthology there are a number of epigrams treating various scenes of antiquity; thus, we come across such fantastic subjects as these: What Helen might have said during the combat between Menelaus and Paris; what Agamemnon might have said when Achilles was armed; words of Achilles to Aias, to reconcile him with Odysseus, etc.,—the list is a long one, and serves to show how the later writers were never wearied of threshing the old straw. The literary cleverness survived the decay of genuine feeling, and inspired the continual rehandling of the old themes in both prose and verse. After all, the warnings against artificial literature are distinctly more numerous than impressive, and the authority of the ancient Greeks has served much more as an admirable model than as a warning.



YOUNG MAN READING.

## CHAPTER VI.—PROSE WRITERS.—*Continued.*

I.—Literary Trifles not the Only Interests. The New View of Moral Greatness. The Life of Epictetus. II.—Marcus Aurelius. His Work as a Writer. III.—Philostratus, and his Discussion of Literary and Artistic Subjects. IV.—The Final Gatherings from Antiquity. Athenæus, and his Collection of Anecdotes. Ælian. Some Historians. V.—Pausanias. Longinus, and his Literary Criticism. The Later Philosophy. VI.—In 529, the Closing of the University of Athens, and the Conversion of the Temple of Hermes into a Monastery. VII.—Further Fragments. The Thrashing of Thrashed Straw.

### I.

IT was not mere trifling subjects like those ridiculed by Lucian that were chattered about in this busy time. Some of the wandering sophists discussed more serious questions: such were Dion Chrysostomus, or golden-mouthed, so called from his eloquence; Polemon of Laodicea, Herodes Atticus, and Adrian of Tyre. Dion began as the merest disclaimer of attractive novelties, but after his conversion to the principles of a sounder philosophy he became a sort of itinerant preacher, who wandered throughout the civilized world giving consolation and advice from the teachings of the past, very much as the early Christians carried the gospel from place to place. The account that we have of Paul's preaching at Athens is but one of many examples of the eagerness of the public to hear them who brought them instruction. A writer has pointed out the resemblance between the desire of the Athenians to hear Paul's new teachings and the way in which Dion was urged to preach,—for there is no other word for it—at the Olympic games. Another curious similarity is this: Dion used to choose a text from Homer, then, as ever, the great book, on which he would speak, and at the conclusion he would invoke the kind offices of Persuasion, the Muses, and Apollo to give his words conviction. The whole story of the blending of Christianity with this decaying society is too vast to be more than touched on here. More appropriate to this place is the consideration of the influence of literature at this time on that which has followed it. But belonging to both religion and literature is the philosophical teaching, already noted in Dion Chrysostom, but more marked in Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. How wide-spread was the feeling that reform was necessary



we may judge from many instances; the depth of the corruption inevitably begot great efforts to eradicate it, and with the decay of the belief in the old mythology there existed the need of appealing to other and more deeply seated principles that should direct right-doing. Everywhere we see the ground being made ready for the reception of Christianity, and in both Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius we may see the most serious statements of the dignity of the moral law. While these two men were alike in announcing this important truth, no greater contrast can be found than that between their respective conditions; M. Aurelius was Emperor, Epictetus a slave. The two men, however, met on a ground which does not concern itself with social position. Both owed the direction of their thought to the philosophy of the Stoics, and both taught the same lofty lessons. The manual of Epictetus was not written down by him, but by one of his disciples, Arrian, who took Xenophon for his model, and, as we shall see below, besides writing a book on history which he called an *Anabasis*, and a minor treatise to which he gave a name already used by Xenophon, remembering the service his model had done to Socrates, recorded his own recollection of his master's talk.

Epictetus was born in Phrygia in the first century of our era, and was the slave of a freedman in Rome at the time of Nero. In that city he lived many years, until Domitian exiled the philosophers, when he betook himself to Nicopolis, a town in Epeirus, and there he is supposed to have died. All that we know of his life is his lameness, his poverty, and his untiring zeal in teaching uprightness in thought and conduct. The upshot of his maxims may be expressed in the words, "Bear and forbear"; endurance and abstinence he forever inculcated with an intensity of language which is very different from the grace of the earlier philosophers. His commands have the severity of laws, with no appeal, no mercy, and no recognition of human weakness. How impressive his lessons were may be gathered from the fact that two of the early Christians were able to adapt them, with but slight modifications, for the study of the young. The rigor of what we may call his statute book is modified in the *Discourses*, of which four books have come down to us out of the eight in which Arrian set forth his master's exposition of his doctrines. What in the manual is uttered as an edict, is here urged by a direct, impressive eloquence that was most convincing. He has no grace or charm, no tenderness, and above all, none of the sympathy that gave Christianity its foothold, but rather a force of rugged conviction. Yet the teachings of the philosophers who acquired their enormous influence in the decaying Roman empire in succession to the Greek rhetoricians and sophists manifested in their new religious spirit the same intolerance of artistic

beauty that characterized the early Christianity. In its place the Christians set the idea of moral beauty; the philosophers, however, not only looked on art as a degradation, they maintained the importance of an appeal to the reason. Epictetus is forever arguing, as the philosophers had been trained for centuries to argue, but philosophy never acquired a popular form; its rewards were vague and intangible. It appealed, too, only to the learned, and, wise as its lessons were, they were too reasonable for general acceptance. It failed to inspire the magnificent enthusiasm which a mighty religion calls forth.

It is circumstances (difficulties) which show what men are. Therefore when a difficulty falls upon you, remember that God, like a trainer of wrestlers, has matched you with a rough young man. For what purpose? you may say. Why, that you may become an Olympic conqueror; but it is not accomplished without sweat. In my opinion no man has had a more profitable difficulty than you have had, if you choose to make use of it as an athlete would deal with a young antagonist. We are now sending a scout to Rome; but no man sends a cowardly scout, who, if he only hears a noise and sees a shadow anywhere, comes running back in terror and reports that the enemy is close at hand. So now if you should come and tell us, Fearful is the state of affairs at Rome, terrible is death, terrible is exile, terrible is calumny; terrible is poverty; fly, my friends; the enemy is near—we shall answer, Be gone, prophesy for yourself; we have committed only one fault, that we sent such a scout. Diogenes, who was sent as a scout before you, made a different report to us. He says that death is no evil, for neither is it base: he says that fame (reputation) is the noise of madmen. And what has this spy said about pain, about pleasure, and about poverty? He says that to be naked is better than any purple robe, and to sleep on the bare ground is the softest bed; and he gives as a proof of each thing that he affirms, his own courage, his tranquillity, his freedom, and the healthy appearance and compactness of his body. There is no enemy near, he says; all is peace. How so, Diogenes? See, he replies, if I am struck, if I have been wounded, if I have fled from any man. This is what a scout ought to be. But you come to us and tell us one thing after another. Will you not go back, and you will see clearer when you have laid aside fear?

What then shall I do? What do you do when you leave a ship? Do you take away the helm or the oars? What then do you take away? You take what is your own, your bottle and your wallet; and now if you think of what is your own, you will never claim what belongs to others. The emperor (Domitian) says, Lay aside your Laticlave. See, I put on the angusticlave. Lay aside this also. See, I have only my toga. Lay aside your toga. See, I am now naked. But you still raise my envy. Take then all my poor body; when, at a man's command, I can throw away my poor body, do I still fear him?

But a certain person will not leave me the succession to his estate. What then? had I forgotten that not one of these things was mine? How then do we call them mine? Just as we call the bed in the inn. If then the inn-keeper at his death leaves you the beds; all well; but if he leaves them to another, he will have them, and you will seek another bed. If then you shall not find one, you will sleep on the ground: only sleep with a good will and snore, and remember that tragedies have their place among the rich and kings



and tyrants, but no poor man fills a part in a tragedy, except as one of the chorus. Kings indeed commence with prosperity: "Ornament the palace with garlands": then about the third or fourth act they call out, "Oh Cithaeron, why didst thou receive me?" Slave, where are the crowns, where the diadem? The guards help thee not at all. When then you approach any of these persons, remember this, that you are approaching a tragedian, not the actor, but Oedipus himself. But you say, Such a man is happy; for he walks about with many, and I also place myself with the many and walk about with many. In sum remember this: the door is open; be not more timid than little children, but as they say, when the thing does not please them, "I will play no longer," so do you, when things seem to you of such a kind, say "I will no longer play," and be gone: but if you stay, do not complain.

## II.

The Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius, the last of the great pagan moralists, show us the same intense feeling of the claims of duty, expressed with a certain tendency to meditation on the emptiness of all things, that is rather a matter of sentiment than of cold reason. In some measure, doubtless, this new spirit was a result of the inevitable absence of companions enforced upon the emperor by his high position. His loneliness intensified his experience of the incapacity of any earthly grandeur to supply the place of an approving conscience, and hence he modifies the rigid tone of Epictetus, and turns continually to the statement of the need of toleration. Thus: (ix. 11.)

"If thou art able, correct by teaching those who do wrong; but if thou canst not, remember that indulgence is given thee for this purpose. And the gods too are indulgent to such persons; and for some purposes they even help them to get health, wealth, reputation; so kind they are. And it is in thy power also; or say, who hinders thee?"

Elsewhere he speaks of the need of love for all men, and of kindness towards all. This tendency, however, is not to be fully accounted for as a personal peculiarity of the emperor's, for in Seneca and others we notice a similar change, as if the lessons of philosophy, when they had become more nearly popular, had acquired a humaner tone. In Marcus Aurelius, indeed, we find many references to that much abused conception, the brotherhood of men, "to care for all men is according to men's nature." No writer, too, has had a more vivid feeling of the two infinities, of the past and the future, that bound the imaginary movement that we call the present:

"Consider, for example, the times of Vespasian. Thou wilt see all these things, people marrying, bringing up children, sick, dying, warring, feasting, trafficking, cultivating the ground, flattering, obstinately arrogant, suspecting, plotting, wishing for some to die, grumbling about the present, loving,



heaping up treasure, desiring consulship, kingly power. Well then, that life of these people no longer exists at all. Again, remove to the times of Trajan. Again, all is the same. Their life too is gone. In like manner view also the other epochs of time and of whole nations, and see how many after great efforts soon fell and were resolved into the elements. But chiefly thou shouldst think of those whom thou hast thyself known distracting themselves about idle things, neglecting to do what was in accordance with their proper constitution and to hold firmly to this and to be content with it." And again, "Some things are hurrying into existence, and others are hurrying out of it; and of that which is coming into existence part is already extinguished. Motions and changes are continually renewing the world, just as the uninterrupted course of time is always renewing the infinite duration of ages. In this flowing stream, then, on which there is no abiding, what is there of the things which hurry by on which a man would set a high price? It would be just as if a man should fall in love with one of the sparrows which fly by, but it has already passed out of sight." And this, "But perhaps the desire of the thing called fame will torment thee—See how soon everything is forgotten, and look at the chaos of infinite time on each side of the present, and the emptiness of applause, and the changeableness and want of judgment in those who pretend to give praise, and the narrowness of the space within which it is circumscribed."

This exalted thought, with the tendency to mysticism that occasionally shows itself, has comforted many minds, in spite of its apparent austerity, by means of its undebatable sincerity and dignity. The upshot of its teaching is virtue and a reasonable, determined virtue, which is surely a good fruit by which to judge its value for mankind.

On returning to literature we find an abundance of less important work. Thus Philostratus, born at about 172 A.D., presents a state of society from which mankind might well have turned with a feeling of weariness. His life of Apollonius of Tyana recounts the impossible adventures of a famous charlatan, who deceived a credulous public by alleged walking in the air, prophecy, and other accomplishments that never fail to find supporters among people intelligent in other respects, for the disposition to believe is often stronger than the proof of the facts which are believed. Besides this curious book, he wrote some *Lives of the Sophists*, which well portray these men. In addition to the older ones from Gorgias to Socrates, he describes the later ones who flourished not long before his own time, and about them he has collected a considerable amount of information. In the *Heroica* another Philostratus, a relative, has written a dialogue concerning the heroes of the Trojan war. It is a collection of mythological discussions treating those famous men from the point of view of a man who is prepared to discredit Homer, and who brings much evidence from the lost cyclic poets. Homer is blamed for his partiality to Odysseus and his unkind treatment of Palamedes. Possibly the point of view, besides suggesting the general rupture with the past, also

illustrates the particular tendency of the later times to modify with unwearying ingenuity all the old traditions. Protesilaus is represented as returned from the shades to this world, where he lives in the position of a sort of domesticated ghost, and it is his report as told by a vintner to a Phenician visitor that makes up the book. The Homeric poem, it is explained, gives credit only to Achilles and Odysseus, and he tries to do justice to the other heroes. Thus, Palamedes comes in for some good words; the Trojan leaders are kindly spoken of, yet Achilles himself is treated at great length and with admiration. Homer remains the leading authority, but many of the statements are taken from the lost cyclic poets. In the *Imagines*, Philostratus describes a number of pictures, apparently some definite collections, and thus throws light on some of the references of the poets, besides explaining some of the customs of the artists. The *Epistles* are seventy-three long letters of trifling value. Possibly some may think this judgment inevitable in any circumstances, and it cannot be avoided when mere rhetorical exercises are under consideration

#### IV.

Of professional rhetoricians should be mentioned Hermogenes, born about 160 A.D., who wrote a number of text-books on this art, which were for a long time in general use. Maximus of Tyre, who belongs probably about thirty years later, left a number of essays on subjects that interested the later Platonists. Of Publius Ælius Aristides, born about 129, or perhaps ten years earlier, we have left a number of speeches, of moderate interest; some are panegyrics of different cities, others are addresses defending the moribund Greek deities, still others are the merest rhetorical exercises. Athenæus deserves longer mention for his *Deipnosophists*, or *Learned Guests*, as its puzzling title is sometimes translated, although it yet remains uncertain whether it is their gastronomic or their literary acquirements that are signified: possibly the word may have had the same double meaning for the author. There is certainly nothing in the book to enable the modern reader to come to a decision, for the rival claims of gluttony and letters are presented with wonderful impartiality. The author was born at Naucratis in Egypt at an uncertain date. A good part of his life was spent at Alexandria, whence he betook himself to Rome. We know that part at least of his book must have been written after 228 A.D. His book consists of a conversation or series of conversations that are supposed to have taken place at Rome in the house of a rich man named Laurentius, when twenty-nine guests were assembled, among whom were Galen of Pergamon, the physician, and Ulpian, the lawyer. These conversations are reported by the author to one Timocrates,



a clumsy device that mars the artistic form of the work. Yet even without this double machinery and its additional awkwardness, the pedantry of the conversations would have swamped any machinery that could have been devised, for the simple reason that no such talk could ever have come from human lips. The conversation is merely the author's excuse for discharging a commonplace book that is crammed with extracts on the greatest possible variety of subjects. The articles of food are placed on the table, and the proper way of spelling and accenting their names at once call forth copious quotations; they suggest what this and that poet has said about them, such or such an incident in the life of a man who spoke of them. Meanwhile various subjects come up, not for discussion, but as outlets for more quotations and anecdotes. The result is that the book is a most complete summary of rare facts, interesting citations, and curious learning, thrown together with a helpless struggle after coherence that leaves the separate facts almost as independent of one another as the definitions in a dictionary. Fortunately there is almost the same abundance, and the variety of the subjects treated has given us a vast amount of curious information on a great many subjects, on the customs of the Greeks, their language, natural history, and especially on their poetry. The number of authors whom Athenæus quotes is about 800, and of about 700 of these we have no other line. He certainly has claims for our forgiveness if he has, at times, mingled his food with his learning. We do not know so much about the life of the ancient Greeks that we can afford to dispense with any information about them, even if it be in good part mere gossip; on the contrary, we are quite as eager for mere gossip about them as we are for gossip about our neighbors in the next street.

To the other collectors of anecdotes less praise can be given. Of Aelian, for example, it may be said that he owes his long-lived fame to the chance that has preserved some of his writings, rather than their safety to his celebrity. He was an Italian by birth, and he lived the greater part of his life in Rome in the third century, but he acquired the mastery of the Greek language, and wrote in it a work called *Miscellaneous Inquiries*, which is a collection of scrappy anecdotes, biographical, historical, and antiquarian, which are all huddled together without the slightest attempt at orderly arrangement. He also compiled a similar work on natural history which is as discursive and incoherent as a column of items in a newspaper.

Diogenes Laertius, whose date is uncertain, wrote a series of lives of the philosophers, which, in the absence of other authorities, possesses a value quite independent of its intrinsic merits. The book is evidently compiled from the various works of a number of writers, but



with great carelessness, so that it is often obscure and contradictory. Anecdotes are strung together without purpose, and there is little care shown in distinguishing the various philosophical systems, so that the best thing that can be said of the book is that it is better than no book at all.

Arrian has been mentioned above as an imitator of Xenophon, and as the writer to whom we are indebted for a record of the sayings of Epictetus; having thus copied his master's *Memorabilia*, he wrote an *Anabasis* of Alexander the Great, describing the campaigns of that general in the East. This is a valuable book; singularly enough what knowledge we have of Alexander's campaigns comes to us mainly from two authors, Q. Curtius and Arrian, who lived five hundred years later, but Arrian's work is complete and drawn from the best authorities. For the facts he consulted the contemporary histories of Alexander, written by his two generals, Ptolemy, the son of Lagos, and Aristobulus, while at the same time he referred also to others. He thus imitated something more than the mere style of the best Greek writers. The battles are described with great care and vividness; indeed the whole book is valuable as a trustworthy account of one of the most important events in the world's history. Arrian also wrote an account of a voyage around the Euxine, and in the Ionic dialect a brief description of India.

Appian, who lived in the middle of the second century in Alexandria, where he was born, and in Rome, wrote a Roman history, by which he meant that of the whole empire. Only part of this has come down to us, that on the civil wars, of which we have no other full record.

Dion Cassius Cocceianus, the son of a Roman senator, and grandson, it is thought, of the rhetorician Dion Chrysostom, was born at Nicæa in Bithynia, in 155 A.D. The best part of his life was spent in Rome, where he held various public positions, and at Capua and in his birth-place he composed a history of that city from its foundation until 229 A.D. The author's public life made him familiar with administrative details; he was naturally acquainted with the Latin language, and thus able to prepare a work that should be a standard authority. It consisted originally of eighty books, of which xxxvii–lx. have come down to us either complete or nearly complete, and much of the rest in fragments. The part that has survived treats of the period between the overthrow of Mithridates and the outbreak of the civil war between Cæsar and Pompey, and is obviously of the greatest importance. Dion Cassius took Thucydides and Polybius for his models, and tried to elucidate as well as to chronicle the events of which he wrote. Naturally enough, the defects of a rhetorical age are to be distinguished in the book, but these are very far from seriously injuring its value.

## V.

Of the life of Pausanias scarcely any more is known or even plausibly conjectured than that he was a Lydian by birth who flourished in the second half of the second century. He left a description of Greece as it was before it was robbed of its artistic treasures, and when, as its quality as a guide-book indicates, a tour in that country was a common thing. The book describes the different regions and mentions the various objects of interest to be seen in each, referring to them mainly, however, from the point of view of a pious pagan who is visiting this home of the old mythology.

Longinus does not belong, except in time, with these historians and geographers, but place may perhaps be found here for the mention of the famous treatise *On the Sublime*, which is ascribed to him. The author, whose full name was Dionysius Cassius Longinus, was probably a Syrian; and although his exact date is uncertain, it is conjectured that he was born about 210 A.D. He was famous among his contemporaries for his profound learning; he was called "a living library and a walking museum." He wrote commentaries on Homer, Plato, Demosthenes, and on some of the poets, as well as on philosophy, but all that we have of him is this treatise on the Sublime. Even this is of doubtful genuineness, and it has been supposed that the essay may belong to some other person or very different period, but it is at least inextricably bound up with his name by common assent. The treatise itself is an attempt to explain what it is that goes to the formation of an impressive style. This is certainly a tempting subject, and the exposition has won great fame, especially among those who hoped that perhaps the merit of the Greek writers was due to some secret which Longinus would unfold. When modern literature recognized no other merit than the imitation of the ancient, the one man who taught writers how to attain sublimity was thought more useful if not more admirable than those who were merely sublime without saying how they became so. Yet the secret is as dark as ever; if Longinus knew it, he never told it, for his precepts about the omission of the copulative conjunctions in order to attain grandeur, and the liveliness that results from the use of question and answer, as in the orations of Demosthenes, are simply rhetorical explanations after the event. The essay, however, is an interesting discussion of the principles of literary art which well meets the objection that there is no use to be derived from the study of rhetoric. The author runs over ancient literature; indeed he also quotes the beginning of the book of Genesis as a sample of eloquence, and illustrates his intelligent



remarks with apt examples. The book is certainly full of merit, even if it has been overrated in modern times by those who have expected too much from it. The later days, when the intelligence of the Greeks was devoted to the study of the great works of the past, produced innumerable commentators, and we are fortunate in having one of the best of their studies.

What was done in literature was also done in philosophy in its wanderings away from Athens. As the moralists had at length produced an ethical code which bore distinct resemblance, in its seriousness at least, to some of the principles of Christianity, the schools which rested on the Platonic doctrines became so far modified in Alexandria by Oriental thought as to produce a sort of theology, which exercised great influence on early Christianity. All that ingenuity could do in the manipulation of philosophical problems had been done by generations of accomplished thinkers, and the result was nothing; the questions that had been asked with every refinement of thought and expression found no answer awaiting them. The mystery of the Universe was unsolved and insoluble in spite of the most cunning intellectual machinery that the world had ever known, and the world was tired of a failure that only became evident when every attempted solution had failed. Convinced of its impotence, philosophy sought the aid of faith, and, thereby advocating its supremacy, it became theology. In short, all that was Greek in Neo-platonism was its name and the language in which it was written.

Philo, commonly called Judæus or the Jew, was born in Alexandria about twenty years before Christ, and in his writings we see an attempt to reconcile the sacred writings of his people with the methods of Greek thought. This he did by explaining the Old Testament allegorically, showing that they contained the highest truths in a veiled form. By his statement of the impossibility of conceiving God, except as he manifests himself in the Logos, or word, he built up an enormous part of the theology of the early Christian writers. Numenius, a Syrian, who lived in the middle of the second century, and Ammonius, a porter of Alexandria, born 170 A.D., carried on the study of philosophy, but one of its most important adherents was Plotinus, born at Lycopolis in Egypt, in 205 A.D. He, like the others, started from Plato. Porphyry, his commentator, born 233 A.D., sought to find allegoric truth in the old Greek mythology. Iamblichus, who died about 330, also did his best to present the good side of the dying system. But the fight, though long, was hopeless, and while Christianity absorbed much from the higher teaching of the Neo-platonists, its growth went on at the expense of the tiresome repetitions of the Rhetoricians and Sophists. Among the last of these were Libanius, of the fourth



century, of whose speeches many are left, which thresh over once more the old straw, with a certain literary excellence but no serious importance. Himerias, born 315, left a great many orations on imaginary subjects, no more literature than school declamation is oratory. More important than these word-jugglers was the Emperor Julian the Apostate, 331-363, who relapsed from Christianity to paganism, and endeavored to enforce a similar change by eloquence as well as by authority. Of his relations to Christianity this is not the place to speak, but it may be observed that what inspired these is what is to be seen in his literary memorials, namely, a great interest in the grand past of Greece, which outweighed the merit of what he perceived in the new dispensation. In Proclus, the last great name of the Greek philosophers, we see another foe of the new religion. He too upheld the dying paganism, from which he drew an eclectic teaching. He died in 485.

## VI.

In 529 the Emperor Justinian closed the school of philosophy at Athens, the one founded by Plato, that had existed nine hundred years, and with its extinction disappeared also the Hellenism that had to the last struggled vainly against Christianity. It died a violent death, succumbing to the same harshness that paganism had before employed against its at last successful rival. In the same year, as part of the persecution of the heathen which had long existed, St. Benedict destroyed the last temple of Apollo at Monte Casino, and established there the first monastery of his order, which formed one of the most important links between the old world and the new. In Alexandria, the Hellenic spirit had expired in blood and riot, with Hypatia for its martyr.

The closing of the university at Athens put an end to the last glimmering of the classical influence of that city in ancient times. Its history meanwhile, since the establishment of Alexandria, had not been without interest; far from it. The Peloponnesian war had shattered its brief supremacy, but its intellectual and artistic importance had long survived its political ruin, and the memory of its wonderful past had at times moderated the severity of its conquerors. When the Macedonians conquered, the city resigned itself easily to its new masters, for, as Parmenion said to Antipater, "what could be done by men who passed their lives in celebrating Dionysos, in public feasts and dancing?" Its ancient eloquence turned to ingenious flattery when at the Eleusinian festival a chorus of noble Athenians sang thus to Demetrius Poliorcetes: "The other gods are remote, or do not give us the least attention. But you we adore as a god who is present, not one of wood or stone, but true and living; and it is to you that we

offer our prayers. And first, O beloved one, grant us peace ; for you can. Punish the Sphinx who ravages all Greece. . . . As for me, I can fight no more." Naturally when the Romans advanced, in their conquest of the world, towards Greece, Athens was ready to receive them. Before that time it had known little of this new Roman power. Plutarch tells us that a mere vague rumor of the capture of Rome had reached Greece ; Heraclides of Pontus, one of Plato's disciples, states that an army coming from the Hyperborean regions had conquered a Greek city called Rome, which lies in the West, not far from the great sea. Rome was revenged in the Middle Ages when it was held that Latin was the native speech of the Athenians.

When, after the first Punic war, ambassadors came to Corinth and Athens with messages of amity, Athens was the first to adapt itself to the new conditions ; it granted to the Romans Athenian citizenship and the privilege of initiation in the Eleusinian mysteries—all it had to give. Its intelligence survived these dynastic changes ; the old tragedies were produced on the stage, and the new comedies of Menander and his rivals ; philosophy flourished and rhetoric, and the influence of its cultivation spread over the West as well as towards the East, and Athens was honored as the home of arts and letters.

After the city was taken by storm by Sylla in his war with Mithridates, it was long in recovering from its harsh fate. Grain was grown within its walls, even in the Agora. The statues were half hidden in the corn, but the old fame of the city still attracted to it hosts of Romans who sought for culture. These visited it for study or for the æsthetic delight which tempts us moderns to the same place or to Rome. And what we call the Athenian university, which was in part supported by imperial generosity, became a most important means of support for the whole city.

This tact, which led them to flatter their conquerors, their devotion to the refining influences of life and their aversion to war, made the Athenians generally popular. Lucian in his *Nigrinus* says that they were brought up in devotion to philosophy and poverty, and that they detested extravagance and display, which they regarded as proper rather for Rome. Praise was given to the liberty, the absence of petty jealousy, the quiet, and leisure of Athens. Libanius called the Athenians "godlike" ; thus the old glory of the citizens of Athens was inherited by their descendants.

Yet there was not an unbroken devotion to study even here—after all there was discord in Olympus—for the young men knew other interests than philosophy and letters ; the pupils of the various teachers formed societies, which fought with stones or even swords over the new arrivals whom they strove to enroll among their number. Un-



popular instructors were occasionally tossed in a rug by their discontented scholars, and even less creditable stories are told of the disorderly conduct of the students. But these trivialities only indicate, what other things more clearly prove, the decay of real interest in Athens, which had sunk to the condition of a provincial city, full, to be sure, of inspiring memories, but insignificant by the side of Alexandria, Rhodes, Pergamon, or even Rome and Marseilles. Its past remained its greatest glory. The library of Alexandria made residence there imperative for men who were doing active work in exegesis, and the wealth of Rome drew teachers as well as pupils from all quarters. Philosophy, as we have seen, continued to be taught for many centuries in its old home by many generations of teachers, but the growth of Christianity was about to displace even this.

## VII.

Not all these later Greeks, however, were philosophers, and amid the general literary work of this time with its continual return to old subjects we find numerous imaginary letters, such as those, already mentioned, of Philostratus, and many other collections of fictitious correspondence, some of which have at different times deceived unpractised students by their mock air of genuineness. Letters of Phalaris, Themistocles, Alexander, and other great men, were composed many centuries after their death, as an exercise in literary composition that ran in parallel lines with the fictitious declamations devised by ingenious rhetoricians to represent the imaginary speeches of great orators. The so-called letters of Phalaris acquired an importance enormously disproportionate to their original worth by Bentley's proof that they were forgeries, whereby he placed the modern criticism of the classics on a sure footing and gave most valuable aid to the development of modern English literature, helping to bring it out from beneath the shadow of the ancient. The mistake which had been made was something like that which would take place if at some future time Tennyson's *Idyls of the King* should be thought real mediæval poems, or Landor's "*Pericles and Aspasia*" a genuine translation from the classics.

The Greeks and Romans were in fact living on their capital, on the traditions and memories that had gathered about ancient Hellas. The present seemed dead. Just as an old man loses all memory of current events and recalls only the incidents of his boyhood, so these dying races recurred for ever to their own youth. The later Sophists, when they came down to the earth at all, discussed remote events at the time of the Peloponnesian and Persian wars, or even earlier: they invented a speech for Xenophon, who proposes to die in place of

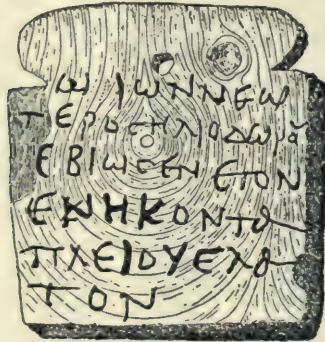


Socrates; they composed an oration that Demosthenes might have uttered, or Solon; they composed imaginary debates between Alexander and his generals, whether or not he should push on to the ocean; Agamemnon considers the advisability of slaying Iphigeneia, etc.; the list was as long as ancient history. In Ovid we shall see similar fantastic treatment of the past, and without going so far from the subject before us we may find abundant instances in the imaginary letters of famous persons, in the fictitious poems that were composed on every hand for the confusion of modern commentators. Dio Chrysostomos, who lived in the time of Trajan, apologizes for an invention concerning modern and inglorious times, on the ground that he will be thought an idle prattler for not appearing in the usual guise of Cyrus or Alcibiades. Nor was it in literature alone that this tendency appeared; Dio Cassius tells that at the games celebrating the opening of the Colosseum and the Baths of Titus in Rome, the naval combats represented those fought between the Corcyræans, Syracusans, and Athenians in the Peloponnesian war, and not any Roman victory.

The eloquence or rhetorical skill with which these fanciful compositions were uttered was their warrant for existing, and amply justified their production. No other purpose was served in the death of political power; and just as the accumulation and display of rich material had become the sole aim of architects, and in sculpture the same profusion of luxury took the place of the long-lived beauty of the art, and costly mosaic expelled painting, so the playing with words was the last sign of the intellectual activity of the Greeks. It was a mere mechanical existence that they led; they went through the motions of living, but with only a pitiable imitation of their former grandeur. Yet even all these inventions were not wholly without benefit. It was a period of dwindling importance, but one that indicated a possible advance in the future. Nature cannot be forever producing; and even the bleak storms of winter enrich the frozen soil.

While the true explanation of this beating over the old straw is to be found in the absence of real interest in life, it must yet be remembered that the very virtue of this race, their interest in the form of any utterance, led to this constant repetition of artificial methods; and the incessant toying with the familiar material, the perpetual restatement of old problems, became in time, both in prose and verse, a very meagre outlet for the intelligence, while an ingenious device for the cleverness, of the Greeks. This artificiality was something like an unending building of block houses, to be destroyed as soon as completed, and while we see some of its results in the dwindling excellence of Greek letters, we may detect a part of its influence in the literature of the Romans, and notably in the heroic poems of Ovid, which have

served as models for a good many writers who kept closely to the methods of the ancients. These later Greeks were not filled with anything to say: they rather possessed, partly by inheritance, a keen desire to speak, and hence said the same thing over and over with unwearying repetition, and the issue was emptiness and barrenness of thought. Literary expression became then a mere thing of schools, not an utterance of the feelings that inspire a mighty people, and the way in which things were formulated became of the chief moment. These stories show the consequences in their remoteness from the actual life of the time. That is wholly lost sight of, and we get pictures of the impossible, placed in a fantastic region in which puppets move on the end of conspicuous wires. Thus is explained, too, the origin of the Greek romances in the disposition which showed itself both in poetry and prose to play with imaginary subjects, as in the elegies of Callimachus, many of the epigrams of the Anthology, and in the imaginary letters, debates, orations dexterously inserted in mouths of long dead characters, all being indications of the death of genuine enthusiasm while the art survived. The art, too, has in its turn triumphed in modern literature. Yet its greatest success was at home.



WOODEN TABLET.

## CHAPTER VII.—THE GREEK ROMANCES.

I.—This Confusion, Great as it was, Led to an Attempted Reorganization of Literary Work in the Romances. The Method of Composition: Prominence of Love, Wildness of Incident, etc. II.—Iamblichus Xenophon of Ephesus. Apollonius of Tyre. Heliodorus. The Modern Descendants of these Romances. III.—Achilles Tatius. Charitons. IV.—Longus and his Pastoral. The End.

### I.

IN its own time, as we have said, this fantastic forged literature was of great service in furthering the development of a new form of composition which was destined to have much influence on modern writing, and the qualities of the Greek romance, the impossible adventures, the succession of catastrophes, the complicated intrigues, the intense love-making, had long formed the ingenious exercises of orators and speakers who lived by entertaining hearers and readers. The tendency of literature towards the discussion of love themes we have noticed even in Euripides, and we have seen how much more distinct it became when Greek letters found their new home at Alexandria. Obviously, the disconnected manner in which this favorite subject was treated in the later days by men who sought to concentrate all their acuteness upon a brief declamation or essay stood in the way of a patient development of the study of the individual character. It furthered the production of rather a number of vivid scenes than of a carefully composed whole, and the Greek romances that have come down to us abound in incident; they lack psychological unity. Invention is exhausted in devising a succession of events; there is no growth, no careful study, of character. The fragmentary nature of the previous studies for the romance were not the only cause of the absence of careful treatment of character; another explanation may be found in that law of intellectual economy which forbids the combination of exciting incidents with psychological analysis. If a succession of catastrophes will sustain the reader's interest, there is no necessity of strengthening this by describing the mental growth of the hero and heroine. It is only when readers have learned every possible combination of flood, flames, earthquakes, wild beasts, robbers, murderers, and poisons, and they no longer shudder at grewsome casualties because they know that there is salvation only a few pages ahead, that the



more delicate and more difficult work of portraying a human being begins. The Greek romance did not attain this point, which was left for modern times, yet it is sufficiently creditable that before their final intellectual extinction this wonderful race should have completed their task of founding every form of literature on which posterity was to work. The romance nearly escaped them, and if they appropriated it too late to develop it thoroughly, they yet in intellectual matters ruled an empire vaster than the material empire of Rome.

While the absence of smoothness in the course of true love is the leading subject of these early romances, there is to be found in all of them an evasion of the difficulties of the psychological problem which hides itself under the accumulation of geographical wonders. Incidents and stories of this sort had long found a place in Greek literature. The *Odyssey* contains them, and even the philosophers, as Plato, with his fantastic islands of Atlantis, had employed the same inventions which appear in all literatures. While the literary history of the Greek romances is obscure in many points, owing to their share in the uncertainty that covers the whole later period of Greek letters, the titles of some of the earliest indicate the free employment of this device, and their frequency is

attested by the fact that Lucian caricatured them in his *True History*. Apparently, the love-stories began by adopting the still earlier geographical romances, which were crammed with impossible details, the human element that bound the incidents together being a couple of lovers in whose experience these adventures occur. One of the very first was written by Antonius Diogenes; it consisted of



EROS, GOD OF LOVE.

twenty-four books, and bore for its title *The Wonders Beyond Thule*. The exact date of its composition is almost hopelessly lost, yet the name of the author makes it clear that he must have lived during this period of the Roman dominion, and it is conjectured to belong to the first century of our era. The epitome of this book which was made by the patriarch Photius in the ninth century shows how close an analogy it bore to the geographical romances; the novel contains the recital of most adventuresome travels, not only up and down the face of the earth, but also through the regions beneath the earth, into Hades and out again, and even to the moon. These details quite overbalance the romantic love incidents, which in comparison are few and insignificant. Indeed the prominence of the fantastic adventures, made up of folk-lore, travelers' tales, and the collections of geographers, places the composition of the story at an early date, before the perpetual treatment of love-themes by sophists and rhetoricians had acquired the full growth that it reached towards the middle of the second century of our era. As has been said, it was these exercises that gave this form of fiction its most important quality, the human element, which has been the basis of modern as of ancient romance; the framework in which this vital part was set came, as we have seen, from the geographical accounts and romances.

## II.

The earliest of those which contained a real romantic quality is that of Iamblichus, a Syrian, and contemporary of Lucian. Before learning Greek and becoming a rhetorician, he acquired a knowledge of the language of Babylon from one of the officials of the king of that city who was taken prisoner in Trajan's Parthian expedition. In the reign of Marcus Aurelius he wrote his romance which he called the *Babyloniaca*. Curiously enough, he pretended that it was merely a version of an old Babylonian story which had been told him by his teacher, who, after all, may have been invented for the occasion. This method of smuggling the romance into Greek literature betrays a certain timidity with regard to its novelty, and it is one that is not unfamiliar to later times. Thus Horace Walpole pretended that his *Castle of Otranto* "was printed at Naples, in the black letter, in the year 1529 A.D.," and that it was "found in the library of an ancient Catholic family in the north of England." The Babylonian friend and teacher of Iamblichus may be fellow-citizens of Onuphrio Muralto, the alleged author, and of William Marshall, the alleged translator, of the later romance. Chatterton's device was the product of similar conditions.

Unfortunately, the phrase which continually meets the student of



Greek literature must be used again here, for the book itself has not come down to us; but the same Photius who described the work of Antonius Diogenes has also left us an analysis of a good part of this important romance. Even a brief account of its confused plot would take up too much space. It need only be said that it concerns the manifold persecutions and sufferings of a loving couple, Simonis, who is the object of the odious attentions of Garmus, king of Babylon, and Rhodanes, her husband. Yet it is not their mental agony, the growth of their love under peril, or the force of despair, that is portrayed, but rather the simple succession of cruel incidents. Some of these were facts that even now have a place in the reports of Egyptian travelers, such as the bees that sting the soldiers to death; others were the commonplaces of folk-lore; while others again were to have a long life in later romance, as when the hero and heroine take a sleeping potion in place of poison. These various casualties and trials are not artistically arranged so that one is in any way an outgrowth of the other; they are rather, as it were, pinned together in artificial sequence, yet we notice that they are more truly devices to inflict anguish on the suffering man and woman than a mere recital of geographical details.

Impossible and incoherent as are the accumulated agonies of this hero and heroine, they have been employed in modern literature, and especially in the *Sofonisbe* of de Gerzan, 1627, which contains many imitations of the plot, and some translations of the few fragments that have been elsewhere preserved. Later we shall see other proofs of the authority of these Greek romances over those written in France and read everywhere in the seventeenth century.

Xenophon of Ephesus, the author of the *Ephesian Story* of *Antheia* and *Habrocomes*, may be mentioned next, although the exact dates of these late writers are almost as uncertain as those of the most remote, and the age to which this author belongs is variously set everywhere between the second and the fifth centuries of our era, with at least a possibility—for one can scarcely call it a probability—of its belonging to the end of the second or the beginning of the third. The romance begins where the others end, with the marriage of the hero and heroine *Habrocomes* and *Antheia*, and then goes on to describe a long series of woes that befell them after this event. It is not, however, any accustomed conjugal infelicity that pursues them, or any domestic tragedy, but rather a hideous nightmare of romantic incidents, separation, long wanderings, and the usual machinery wherewith these writers were wont to amuse their readers. In general the reader who is brought up on the maturer novels of later times finds these early inventions awkward and cumbersome, but in this story the creaking of the machinery is more astounding than anywhere, for all



the misadventures follow upon the declaration of an oracle that the unhappy pair are fated to endure many calamities by land and sea, but that finally they shall enjoy happier fortune. Hence they are sent abroad shortly after their marriage in order, apparently, to make the oracle true, and they face with composure the dangers which they know in advance so well. Their parents have enough faith to send the children off, but not enough to await their return, for they kill themselves in despair; but the reader does not share their doubts, and



GODDESS FORTUNA.

when matters look worst he is consoled by the crudity of the device, which has its only rival in literature in Bottom's suggestion for a prologue in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. More than half the face is seen through this lion's neck. Obviously, this method of starting the unhappy pair upon their adventures has not found admirers, but, granting its clumsiness, their misfortunes are like those of all the rest, and it ought not to have failed to please those who are only satisfied when a work of fiction ends well. Here the pious reader was insured against disappointment. The two sufferers are in perpetual misery: robbers, cannibals, and worse forever threaten them; their personal beauty is a continual source of peril, but finally the oracle is verified and all is well. Some of the incidents are the same that are mentioned among the devices of the other writers: the sleeping-potion, for instance, while of course the geographical turmoil rages as ever, although with more than the usual confusion.

The story of Apollonius of Tyre bears a curious resemblance to the romance just described, and it is further interesting from the fact that it reached Europe and was enormously popular throughout the Middle Ages. We possess it only in this Latin version, which in its brevity bears the marks of an abridgment like those chapbooks, published even so late as the middle of the last century, of the long French romances of earlier date. The Greek original is lost, and indeed that it ever existed is only a matter of inference from the nature of the story, its list of adventures, and the general tone of the rhetorical parts. The earliest mention of this version is in a grammatical treatise that belongs to the seventh century, and of course it may have been in existence earlier. Of its later life we know more; it doubtless

reached Europe as part of the booty of the crusades, and Apollonius soon took his place alongside of Alexander the Great, King Arthur, and Charlemagne. Gower recites many of the incidents of his career in his *Confessio Amantis*; he is referred to by Chaucer, and so became the original of Shakspeare's *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*. In the Latin version that we have it is easy to detect probable modifications of the original at the hands of the translator, who not merely abridged but adapted the Greek work. Indeed it has been plausibly conjectured that the work composed by a pagan Greek was put into Latin by some early Christian. As it stands it offers us one of the very few examples that can be found of the influence of Greek work upon mediæval literature. Investigation will doubtless determine more, for it is impossible to suppose that the unlimited abundance of Greek rhetoric and sophistry that pervaded the whole Roman empire in the early centuries of our era should have vanished without leaving many traces on the succeeding developments of literature.

The longest and in some ways the most important of all these romances is the *Ethiopics*; or, *Adventures of Theagenes and Chariclea*, of *Heliodorus*. The usual obscurity hides the author. We only know that he is mentioned in a church history that belongs to the first half of the fifth century, and it is there said that the writer of the romance afterwards became a bishop. If this were true, he would have been more fortunate than Dean Swift, whose *Tale of a Tub* barred his way to such promotion, but the statement is now regarded as merely an idle rumor, and the only fact that we can get is that the book was written before that date. The whole story reeks with paganism, and if its author was a priest, he was a priest of Apollo.

An outline of the plot shows all the family traits of this species of composition: *Theagenes*, a Thessalian of noble birth, meets *Chariclea*, a Delphian priestess, and the two fall instantly in love with each other and elope together. Once started off, they simply bound from the hands of one band of robbers or pirates to those of another, and *Chariclea's* beauty never fails to inspire each chief in turn with the most desperate love. At length they reach Egypt, and there they are seized by a band of Ethiopians and carried away into captivity. It is decided they shall be sacrificed, *Theagenes* to the sun, *Chariclea* to the moon; but *Chariclea* explains that she is the white daughter of an Ethiopian king, exposes the strawberry mark on her left arm, and is at once recognized as princess of the country, and all ends happily in her marriage with *Theagenes*. But this sketch does no manner of justice to the ingenuity with which every simple solution of the many complications that arise is continually retarded. Perpetually the feelings of the readers are assaulted; no sooner does he give a sigh of relief over the



escape of the lovers from one peril than he holds his breath over some new impending evil. The story begins, too, in the very middle, and the uneven movement is further complicated by long descriptions of one thing and another, that give the author an excellent opportunity to show his skill. Yet these discursions have with time become subservient to the romantic side of the tale; they no longer hold the first place.

It was in 1534 that the first edition of the Greek text was published; a French translation by Jacques Amyot, the translator of Plutarch, appeared in 1549, and this was followed by an English version in 1577. Editions rapidly followed one another in both France and England, and other translations were made in Spain, Italy, Holland, and Germany. In Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (xii. 21 fl.) we find one of the incidents made use of; Racine once thought of writing a play founded on this romance, and Alexander Hardy wrote eight out of its copious accumulation of incidents. In Spain it inspired a good part of the *Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* of Cervantes, and Calderon's *Teágenes of Cariclea*, as well as Perez de Montalvan's *Hijos de la Fortuna*.

Yet these instances of manifest indebtedness are less important proofs of the nature of the influence which this and the other Greek romances exercised, than are the countless resemblances appearing in the French heroic romances of the seventeenth century. The fantastic notion of love was alike in both; what was the last invention of Greek ingenuity, which grew up in a period of general decay and was molded into shape by generations of clever word-jugglers, bore a close resemblance to the notion of that passion which had formed itself in accordance with the ideas of chivalry. As Gervinus has said, the childishness of the old age of the Greek mind was like the childishness of the new modern civilization, and the discovery of a similar tendency to exaggeration and formless literary work among the ancients must have given enormous encouragement to those unpractised writers who would have been powerless had they undertaken to measure themselves against the real masterpieces of Greek literature. The inheritance of the long-winded unartistic mediæval work was strong, and lent itself to following these awkward models, while nothing is more lifeless than the early Italian efforts to write classic dramas and epics. The Renaissance did its best to make a complete rupture with the Middle Ages, but the most successful work that it inspired was that which accepted them and let the two currents, the mediæval and the classic, flow naturally into one great stream, as was done in the English drama. We may well believe that the cumbersomeness and crudity of these Greek romances were not perceived by those admirers as they are by



us. It was enough for them that the romances were written in Greek, they had not begun to trouble themselves about dates, those awkward destroyers of idle hypotheses, and with the friendly aid of gross exaggerations and artificial mechanism they were enabled to let modern romance enjoy an equable development from its mediæval origin to its present condition, uninterrupted, as were most forms of literature, by nervous reference to what the ancients had done. The result is certainly one to be proud of, and its worth is undoubtedly in great measure due to the immunity of fiction from premature comparison with ancient work. It has grown up by itself, correcting its faults by its own experience and not by continual appeal to text-books, and is now, as every one knows, the one branch of letters in which society records itself most distinctly, and that, rather than the observance of rules, is the true aim of literature.

Nothing could exceed the generous supply of artificiality which the Greek romances supplied to a sympathetic world. The hero and the heroine of Theagenes and Chariclea are models of beauty, yet the heroine is most distinctly the protagonist, the leading character of the book, which in this respect is adapted to gratify those who were brought up on mediæval fictions. Unending pains are taken to keep the reader in a perpetual twitter of excitement over the countless vicissitudes of the young couple who forever escape, as it were, from the frying-pan to the more threatening perils of the fire. This device of retarding the final solution was very effective and became the common property of the modern writers of romance.

And just as the first sight of a new shore after crossing the ocean reminds the traveler of the last view of the one he left, so the beginning romance of modern times presents a notable likeness to the expiring fiction of antiquity. In both we find the same artifice and tumultuous accumulation of incident, a similar absence of psychological development—this quality existing only in Longus's Daphnis and Chloe, and even there but imperfectly—and an almost identical aristocratic tone that betokens a literary creation rather than a product of popular growth. The resemblance goes further, in accordance with this last-named quality, extending to the admiration that is given in both ancient and early modern romance, to natural beauty only when it has known the decorative hand of man. The park and the garden are the favorite scenes; the landscape is only praised after it has been adorned by the landscape gardener. Especially are these remarks true of the French pastorals, which were written after the Greek ones had been translated and received with the enthusiasm that was given to everything that bore the stamp of classic antiquity. When the Greek left off, the modern man began—in romance at least; and a similar con-

dition of things may also be noticed in some of the forms of poetical composition. The literary style of the two periods presents the same interesting likeness, both being marked by the same artifices of composition.

There were yet other causes of the noticeable likeness between the gropings of an expiring civilization and those of the one beginning, among which may be mentioned the surviving influence of the Greek romances through a good part of the Middle Ages, when we find many of their most characteristic qualities appearing in an easily recognizable form. The construction of some of the mediæval poems, the sequence of incidents, the subjects themselves, bear unmistakable traces of late Greek originals, probably reaching the poets of the Middle Ages through Latin translations in the many cases when the Greek itself was an absolutely unknown tongue. The proof is not positive, but it forms an impressive accumulation of possibilities and probabilities that corroborates the intrinsic difficulty of affirming the absolute annihilation of an abundant stream of material—a difficulty as great as that of asserting positive invention at any period. The Greek names of some mediæval heroes and heroines; the way in which the passion of love is portrayed; certain grammatical constructions in the language, and the use of certain words almost transliterated strengthen the hypothesis, which is especially strengthened by the resemblance of the incoherent incidents of the poems to those of the Greek romances. Yet, even if it be acknowledged that the influence of the Greek romances did not wholly expire in the Middle Ages, the fact would not greatly modify the interest of the similar treatment that marked the decay and the revival of letters, because this last period was full of new aims and courted new methods, as we may see by comparing Boccaccio's "*Filocolo*" with the mediæval form of "*Floire et Blanceflor*." Literary art begins for modern times with the great Italian's prose, and it is here that the strongest analogy with the late Greek appears most vividly. It is easier, perhaps, to explain the interest in the tales of adventure by supposing them to be an unbroken chain, than it is to imagine that they were invented over again. The subsequent development of the modern novel lies outside of our subject; it will be seen that the new direct translations only furthered a taste already existing.

### III.

Another romance which has come down to us complete is the *Loves of Clitopho and Leucippe*, by Achilles Tatius, an evident imitator of Heliodorus. The story is one of the usual sort. Robbers and pirates; battles, murders, and sudden deaths, which their position in the novel



prove to be nothing but trances—the whole machinery is there, dimly concealed beneath alleged facts which are quite as romantic as the harmless blood-letting, and over all a veil of sophistical declamation. Of the author's history nothing is known; there is an idle rumor that he too was a Christian bishop, but this is only part of the general imitation of Heliodorus. He lived apparently at about the time when Musæus and Nonnus uttered the last notes of Greek poetry, say in the fifth century. If realism is not a striking quality of the literary work of this time, certainly no book is less marked by it than is this romance of Achilles Tatius. The artificial life of the puppets about whom he writes is thickly overlaid with all the devices of an artificial rhetoric. The very beginning furnishes an excellent example of the method, in its description of a picture of the Rape of Europa, at which the narrator of the romance was looking when the hero met him and began to recount his adventures. This description of the picture was evidently written to perform what was a frequent exercise of the Sophists, as the similar descriptions of pictures which Philostratus wrote will show, and here it supplies what is by far the most lifelike part of the story. Here is a bit of it:

“The artist had shown great skill in managing the shade; for the sun-rays were seen dispersedly breaking through the overarching roof of leaves, and lighting up the meadow, which, situated as I have said, beneath a leafy screen, was surrounded on all sides by a hedge. Under the trees, beds of flowers were laid out, in which bloomed the narcissus, the rose, and the myrtle. Bubbling up from the ground, a stream flowed through the midst of this enamelled meadow, watering the flowers and shrubs; and a gardener was represented with his pickaxe opening a channel for its course. The maidens above mentioned were placed by the painter in a part of the meadow bordering upon the sea. Their countenances wore a mingled expression of joy and fear; they had chaplets upon their heads, their hair fell dishevelled about their shoulders; their legs were entirely bare—for a cincture raised their garments above the knee—and their feet were unsandalled; their cheeks were pale and contracted through alarm; their eyes were directed towards the sea; their lips were slightly opened as if about to give vent to their terror in cries; their hands were stretched out towards the bull; they were represented upon the verge of the sea, the water just coming over their feet; they appeared eager to hasten after the bull, but at the same time fearful of encountering the waves. The color of the sea was twofold: towards the land it had a ruddy hue; farther out it was dark-blue; foam also, and rocks and waves were represented; the rocks projecting from the shore, and whitened with foam, caused by the crests of the waves breaking upon their rugged surface.”

This description reads as if it could only have been written before the very picture, and it is curious to notice what a near likeness it bears to some of the Italian work, as if at least tradition had handed down



the artistic methods of a thousand years earlier, however unlikely, though not impossible, such survival may be.

The quality of the romances is shown most vividly in this one with its exaggerated rhetoric. The power of love naturally calls forth all the writer's raptures. Thus :

"I rose from the table intoxicated with love. Upon entering my accustomed chamber, sleep was out of the question. It is the law of nature that diseases and bodily wounds always become exasperated at night. . . . By the same rule, the wounds of the soul are much more painful while the body is lying motionless ; in the day, both the eyes and ears are occupied by a multiplicity of objects ; thus, the soul has not leisure to feel pain, and so the violence of the disease is for a time mitigated ; but let the body be fettered by inactivity, and then the soul retains its susceptibility, and becomes tempest-tossed by trouble ; the feelings which were asleep then awaken. The mourner then feels his grief, the anxious his solicitude, he who is in peril his terrors, the lover his inward flame."

The power of love extends to beasts, plants, minerals (witness the magnet), rivers, and streams.

Eloquence is its only rival. Whatever happens, the characters readily declaim. Thus: "Has Fortune delivered us from the hands of buccaneers only that she [Leucippe] may fall a prey to madness? Unhappy that we are, when will our condition change? We escape dangers at home only to be overtaken by the shipwreck; saved from the fury of the sea and freed from pirates, we were reserved for the present visitation—madness!" etc. The style is familiar, and it is not made more impressive by the so-called facts of natural history and geography that are placed in this strange setting.

Fortune, it will be noticed, is referred to as the cause of this strange conjunction of events; and the prominence given to the power of this reckless deity, and the absence of even shadowy references to the older pagan gods, make it possible that the author was a Christian exercising himself with the familiar literary machinery. At any rate, he was not an ardent pagan. This new deity, Tyche, Fortune, had grown powerful when the old pantheon was emptied, and nowhere had it enjoyed more absolute rule than in these stories, and in this one it was less burdened by any subordination to probability than anywhere else. This goddess, who stood for the blind chance that seemed to have so much power for evil when the old gods had proved powerless against the disasters that had made over the whole condition of the ancient world, had become powerful from the very decay of her rivals. Thus Polybius had called Rome the noblest and most beneficent work of Fortune. Yet he had a broad vision and refused to regard this Fortune as a blind force; he called it rather an honest umpire, an intelligent overruling

deity who gave power to a people that had earned it. Plutarch, too, had said that virtue brought with it as reward the gifts of Fortune, but in general the observation of the current confusion inclined men to ascribe every form of misery to the caprice of this uncertain deity. In these romances she is omnipotent, for just as the belief in her control removes from men all responsibility for the results of their actions, so in literature the possibility of ascribing any incoherent series of incidents to the well-known variety of her mandates tended to make unnecessary all effort to attain probability or orderly sequence of events.

In the *Adventures of Chaereas and Callirhoe*, by Chariton of Aphrodisias, we have another instance of the uniformity that prevailed in these romances in spite of the most desperate struggles after new inventions. All the old terrors reappear: robbers, maritime perils, apparent death which is only a delusion, enamored villains, all are there, but virtue finally triumphs and all is well. There is an attempt to make a historical background for the accumulated adventures, but it is one that will not endure examination, although it leaves with the romance the credit of being one of the first of the long-lived historical romances. What it lacks in history it more than makes up with geography: the scene opens in Syracuse, and is laid further in Asia Minor, Babylon, and of course in Egypt, for in this remote antiquity we find the earliest international novels. Fortunately, however, this tale of suffering love is not impeded by the customary introduction of superfluous bits of information about natural history; the story runs on with commendable smoothness and comparative simplicity; it only needs a more genuine tale of passion to be really successful. The author's indebtedness to the earlier romancers is everywhere apparent, although it is uncertain which can be said to have borrowed from the other, Chariton or Achilles Tatius.

These were the most important of the Greek romances; those that followed them during the later period were but feeble copies of these admired originals and scarcely fall within the scope of this book. The most important, or, rather, the least unimportant of these later productions is the story of Hysmine and Hysminias by the philosopher Eumathius, or Eustathius as he is more accurately named. The book is full of faults, such as might be expected in a feeble copy of Achilles Tatius; it is crammed with amorous absurdities, and is only remarkable for the extravagant somnolence of the love-lorn hero, who in the brief moments of wakefulness recounts his dreams. This book was probably composed in the twelfth century, as was the story of Rodanthe and Dosicles, by Theodorus Prodromus, an imitator of Heliodorus.



## IV.

Along with these romances belongs the single Greek pastoral story that has come down to us, the *Daphnis and Chloe* of Longus, which, to be sure, takes up another subject than the romances, but is yet strongly marked with their characteristics. Naturally this is a love story; the hero and heroine are a rustic young couple who do not cross the seas to endure fantastic adventures. The setting of the story is near Mitylene in the island of Lesbos, and the pastoral background forms the most essential part of the framework of this most artificial tale. The description of summer and winter, the occupations of shepherds, the joy in the harvest, form the current that floats the recital of the anything but innocent love of *Daphnis and Chloe*. In the study of literature one thing is to be noticed, and that is the uniformity of tone that prevails at any given period. In an artificial time, whatever efforts may be made to secure simplicity, the result will be an artificial simplicity, in which convention rules, just as truly as the garden about a handsome house will be marked with the current artificiality; and always this quality will prevail in exact proportion to the general condition of men's tastes. Hence it will surprise no one to find in the pastoral of Longus a most knowing and suggestive representation of the youthful ignorance of the hero and heroine, and a picture of nature that infallibly balances the general directness of vision prevailing at his time. How exact an eye these later writers had is easily determinable from a brief study of the romances, and here we find a sophist attempting to be natural, yet hampered—or, as he doubtless imagined, supported—by all the tricks of his trade. The idylls of Theocritus brought a breath of fresh air into the dying classicism of Alexandria, but later the love of them had shared the fate of the art and literature, and had succumbed to the common artificiality. Fantastic descriptions of rustic scenes had long been common; praise of the song of birds, of the loveliness of flowers, rural simplicity, the seasons, pastoral adventures, beautiful scenery, had long inspired men who were never tired of seeking in contrast, cleverness, and brilliancy for new delight. Libanius, for example, has left us an exercise in praise of that venerable subject, the beauty of spring, in which there is a description of a lovely garden, that contains these words:

“All this was delightful to look upon, yet to describe it to an audience is yet more delightful.”

And this is but one of many instances of the way in which this subject





was treated. Everywhere in literature proportion is preserved, and when the drawing-room is the scene of one form, it is the garden that appears in the attempted delineations of nature. To be sure, the

romances do not concern themselves, after the manner of contemporary English novels, with the instances of social life in the drawing-room, but their whole tone is that of conventional society. The hero and heroine are always of gentle blood; the populace has its modern equivalent in the chorus of an Italian opera; they fill the humble position of rabble, citizens, soldiers, and the like. The action of the stories is distinctly busied only with the aristocratic victims of circumstances. This pastoral presents rustic life, devoid of its griminess, and only as it appears to people of position. Yet when this is granted it must also be



SHEPHERD.



SHEPHERD.

acknowledged that although the picture drawn is a conventional one, it is yet well drawn. It is a fairyland, but a charming fairy land that the author puts before us. The love of Daphnis and Chloe knows all the delays and hindrances that an ingenious invention can

devise, but its setting is more attractive than the story itself. The pictures are the work of a time which lacked any real enthusiasm, which, indeed, was affected by some of the most worthless interests, but the idyllic touches here and there show that the old Greek spirit had not wholly died. It was, however, lamentably checked with rhetorical artifices; the language is a mass of willful prettinesses, enough to place the story among the sophistical productions, although its exact date cannot be determined. It was translated by Amyot in 1559 A.D., but its ground was already taken, and although it enjoyed great popularity, the pastorals of Italy and Spain had firm hold of the popular taste, and the work of Longus remained a sort of literary curiosity, a wonderful example of grace mingled with the abundant literary artifice of a dying civilization.

Practically the life of Greek letters was ended; a great task was done, and what remained was only the gradual evaporation of literature that coincided with the general enfeeblement of active interests that constituted the dark ages. The world was in process of incubating another social system when the authority of Rome and of Greece was to reassert its power. Here we may leave the description of Greek literature, after attempting to trace it from its magnificent beginning, through its greatness and its combined brilliancy and conventionality, until it became a mechanical art and so perished. In all history there is no such subject, nothing that can compare with the naturalness and exuberant life of Greek letters, no sadder instance of complete decay.

THE END.

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